1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

rooted fear of the unknown. Spirits, ghosts, and "cunjuh" all powerfully influence their daily existence.

Young and middle-aged persons, reticent before strangers, appear dubious and suspicious. They profess great knowledge of conjure and superstitions, but they hasten to say that they "sho ain't gonuh tell nobody" what they know about these things. The old inhabitants, more loquacious, enjoy relating their beliefs and customs to a willing listener.

Among the older inhabitants is Aunt Mary,* the daughter of a slave, who remembers the days when rice fields lay east of the town and it was no unusual sight to find a big "'gatuh" caught in the rice canal. Early morning finds Aunt Mary hobbling to her work of scrubbing the entrances to stores. In going to and from work she always drags a broom behind her. When we asked the reason for this, she answered, "'Cuz uh dohn wants none uh deze fixuhs tuh git muh foot track, cuz den dey kin hanl yuh jis lak dey wants tuh." [7]

"Do you really believe that, Aunt Mary? Do you believe in dreams and ghosts too?"

"I sho does belieb in dreams an ghoses. Ef uh hab suttn dreams, dey sho comes true. Tuh dream uh fresh poke some uh yuh kin folks gwine die; fresh beef mean duh det uh some wite pusson yuh knows well. Tuh dream uh a dead pusson is a sho sign uh rain, an anudduh sign uh rain is wen a suttn place on muh head itches."

The old woman switched her broom around under the other arm and continued, "As fuh ghoses, ain't uh got tuh belieb in um? [8] Wy, I kin see um muhsef. Yuh see, I wuz bawn wid a double caul obuh muh face an anybody knows dat a pusson bawn wid a caul obuh dey face kin sho see ghoses.[4] Deah's mo dan one kine uh ghos. Some come befo yuh natchul an pleasant; den some kin sho make yuh sked. I kin tell long fo anyting happen wen it gwine happen.

* *Mary Hunter, 548 East St. Julian Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

787 Nuttn ebuh happen tuh me widout me knowin it long fo it come." [22a, •]

301 751 (115) Another old woman • can recall when her slave mother used to carry her on her back to the spring on their plantation. This woman wears large earrings of gold which she has worn since her mother pierced her ears in childhood. Each wrist is encircled by a band of copper wire. She smiled and inadvertently touched the wire as she explained its presence.

"Ef yuh wuks hahd aw does much washin, it heps duh nerbes." [8, 12]

754 At the mention of "cunjuh" the old woman lit her pipe, smiled pathetically, and shook her head. As the blue smoke curled upward, she told of having been conjured and of how it had changed her whole life in a few short weeks.

(845) "Yeahs ago," she sighed, "I hab a huzbun wut treat me well an uh wuz libin good. Dis wuz jis fo muh twins wuz bawn. Ise a twin too, an it sho is bad luck.[67] Deah wuz somebody wut want muh huzbun tuh leab me an go off wid um, so dey hab me fix.[15] Wen uh come home one day, I step in a hole by duh doe an deah wuz a bottle fix wid some tings in it. Right den an deah I took sech a misery in muh lef side an den uh swell up all obuh; muh hands wuz twice deah size.[8, 12, 15] I stay dataway till I fine out wut tuh do. Den I sprinkle black peppuh an potash in duh hole weah duh bottle wuz an it bile up. Den some friens wash me off in wiskey ebry day an soon uh wuz all right.[6] But wen duh twins wuz bawn duh boy twin hab a lill hole right in is lef side weah I hab duh misery frum duh fixin. He lib nine days fo he die."

"But the person did not succeed in getting your husband after all, did she?" we asked.

"Yes'm but she sho did. Whoebuh fix me fix muh huzbun too, cuz he go off an leab me an I know he ain nebuh done dat lessn he bin fix. Muh son die wen he wuz twenty-tree an

• *Dye Williams, Old Fort.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

anybody dies roun heah, some root wukuh is responsible fuh the death.[15, 69b] Now, me, I don't believe people kin put sumpm unduh steps aw unduh yuh house that will hahm yuh. Some time ago my son, my only chile, wuz drownded. Well every time I tun roun some of my neighbuhs wuz tellin me my son's death wuzn't fair. They say 'somebody hoodood yuh chile an cause him tuh git drownded.' "

She hastened to add, however, that she did believe "fuh sho" in some signs and omens, concerning which she has been "plenty sperienced."

"Take fuh instance," she explained, "ef I staht out an have tuh tun back, I know it's bad luck less I makes a cross mahk an spits in it. I try tuh keep a woman frum bein the fust pusson tuh come tuh my house on Monday mawnin even ef I have tuh call in a man passin by. Fuh a woman tuh be yuh fust visituh on Monday mawnin means bad luck the balance of that week. I won't borruh aw len salt, fuh my mothuh alluz said it wuz bad luck. I believe in all the ole signs I ebuh heahd my parents talk bout. I wouldn't sweep trash out of the house aftuh dahk fuh anything cuz it'll sweep yuh luck away. Nevuh shake a tablecloth out duh doe aftuh dahk cause it means the death of yuh kin. Nevuh sew aw make a piece fuh a sick pusson aw that pusson will die.[49] An dreams, I sho do believe in em. Jis fo my son wuz drownded I suttnly have a dream that mean a death in the fambly."

The next person * we interviewed several blocks away expressed an absolute faith in the return of the dead in various shapes. This was a man, who spoke with great earnestness of two experiences he had undergone, one with spirits, the other with a witch. He, too, had been born with a caul.[4]

"Muh fus time tuh see a ghos wuz in a rainstawm. Me an muh brudduh wuz caught, so we run tuh a ole vacant house an soons we git inside, duh doe slam shut. We tought it wuz

* *S. B. Holmes, 716 East Perry Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

duh win, but wen uh look roun deah wuz standin in duh cawnuh two men wid no head. I tought muh brudduh see em too. Wen duh rain stop, we lef. Muh brudduh didn say nuttn, so I say, 'Did you see dem mens in dat house?' He say, 'No, wut mens?' Wen I tole im, he tought I bin crazy. But lots uh time attuh dat I seen ghos." He folded his lips and nodded sagely.

"Now bout witches. Yuh know ghos an witches is diffunt. Witches is libin people an ghos is spirits uh duh dead. I know a ole uhmun ebrybody say wuz a witch. Well, bery soon she wuz ridin me.[69] I could eben see uh come. Duh winduh—it would go up, an den uh would begin tuh choke an smudduh till somebody wake me up. I git reel tin an po. Den cross duh street wuz a man wich wuz complainin bout his wife bein rid by a witch. It seem lak duh witch would ride me, den go obuh tuh his house. So he say he would trap uh. He stay up. When he heah his wife strugglin, he git a axe hanl an begin frailin roun in duh dahk till he hit sumpm. It let out a screech an a cat run out duh winduh an down duh paat. So duh nex mawnin duh man git his dog an put im on duh cat's trail.[68] Well, suh, bout half a mile down duh road in duh fence cawnuh wuz ole Malinda Edmonde wid tree rib broke. She beg im not tuh kill uh, but dat broke up duh witch ridin."

Further verification of the belief in the existence of spirits and witches was given us by Jack Wilson * who operates a small junk shop in the vicinity. We visited the elderly Negro in his residence and place of business, a small, queerly shaped shack that entirely blocks the narrow lane on which it stands. The lodging is hardly more than a shelter made by driving several long poles into the ground, suspending on these a frame-work of rope and wire, and piling on this foundation pieces of tin, iron, cardboard, and other junk. A small opening left at each end reveals on the inside no furni-

* *Jack Wilson, 272 McAlister Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

347 ture, only some old pipes and pieces of scrap iron, heaps of
burlap sacks, and ragged clothes. Outside is a small vege-
351 table garden, and clustered around the house in confusion
are the odd automobile parts, lengths of pipe, parts of stoves,
rags, and other miscellaneous items that make up the old
man's stock in trade.

• 787 Wilson acknowledged a firm belief in the supernatural.
795 He told us, "I wuz bawn wid spiritual knowledge which gib
me duh powuh tuh read duh mines uh people.[23a, •] I kin see
people wut bin dead many yeahs. Duh dead know wut duh
libin is doin an come roun deah close kin an friens wen dey is
in trouble.[56] I kin speak tuh duh dead folk in song an dey
kin unduhstan me.

"I kin see ghos mos any time. Dey seem lak natchul peo-
ple. Duh way I know it's a ghos is cuz I kin nebuh ketch up
wid um. Dey keep jis a suttn distance ahead uh me.

754 "Witches an cunjuh is jis groun wuk. Ef yuh keep way
frum um dey sho caahn hut yuh. Some hab magic powuh
wut come tuh um frum way back in Africa. Muh mothuh
use tuh tell me bout slabes jis brung obuh frum Africa wut
hab duh supreme magic powuh. Deah wuz a magic pass
wud dat dey would pass tuh udduhs. Ef dey belieb in dis
magic, dey could scape an fly back tuh Africa.[69a] I hab a
uncle wut could wuk dis magic. He could disappeah lak duh
win, jis walk off duh plantation an stay way fuh weeks at a
time. One time he git cawnuhed by duh putrolmun an he jis
walk up to a tree an he say, 'I tink I go intuh dis tree.' Den
he disappeah right in duh tree."

124 These interviews, chosen at random from among the Old
Fort Negroes, afford some small glimpse behind the scenes of
this section's placid daily routine. They give significance
[777 to the penny often seen nailed to the bone-white doorstep
789] and help the outsider to understand the mojo ring or luck
piece worn by almost every man, the silver dime tied around
many a woman's ankle.[8, 12a, c, d]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

bush in somebody's yahd. They can't go out till you let them. You plant it in yuh own yahd. Nobody can get in to do you hahm. That's why I'm safe now. But," he concluded, with a melancholy look around his meagerly furnished domain, "I should've had it befo. My enemy has even prevented me from gettin on relief."

Lewis showed us his single treasured book, which he said contained magic art.*

"This book has helped me some," he said, "but I didn't really need it. I was birthed with my wisdom because I was the seventh child an bawn with a caul." [4]

We asked if he could see and talk with spirits.

"I see them," he said simply.[54, 55, 59] "Theah is a little ghos that stays right roun this house. The firs night I moved in heah he walked right in an jumped on me. I managed to throw him off. Now he comes every night. Sometimes he stands at the gate with his feet so high off the groun," measuring about a foot, "an his face is turned backwards,[57] but he can always see you. I don't talk to him any aw try to come close, because he would hahm me aw cause me to hahm myself. I jus pass him by as if he wasn't theah. But I see him.

"I know theah must be buried treasure wheah this house is built, fuh wheahevuh theah is money aw othuh treasure a ghos is put theah to gahd it.[61] One time I went out to Deptford with two othuh men to dig up a pot of money that I knew was buried theah. I saw three spirits, one man an two women. We dug and dug an finally we could see the pot of money. Jus then one of the women laughed, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' The pot sunk down deepuh in the groun. We all ran.

"The laugh that spirit gave went right through me. I nevuh tried to dig up the money again. Right now I know

* *L. W. de Laurence, "The Book of Magical Art, Hindu Magic and East Indian Occultism." Chicago: The de Laurence Company, Twelfth Edition, Revised, 1914.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

775 theah is treasure buried heah unduh me, but I wouldn't try
•787 to get it. It is bad luck. That spirit warned me.
556 "I see witches, too," he continued. "Not everybody can
754 tell a witch, but I can. Theah's an old woman on Gwinnett Street with some cows. Othuh people don't know it, but she's the worse kind of witch. Not very long ago she came and rode a woman heah in Tin City and sucked uh blood.[69a] You ought to see that woman. She's so thin and weak she can't stand up."

"But isn't there some way to keep witches out?" we asked.
[789] "Yes, you can lay a bruhmstick cross the doe befo night an they can't come in. A little salt is good. They don't take to salt." [69a]

Then he insisted on returning to the subject of his magic book. We evinced the proper interest and he showed us a strange recipe jotted down in almost illegible writing on the flyleaf of this book.

Eggs—2
carisin—1 pint
turpentine—1 pint
vinegar
cy pepper
table salt—1 box

"That's a cunjuh mixin," the old man explained. "I
[759] don't know what it's faw. It was in the book when Joe Fraser, a root doctuh,[48] gave it to me."

"Where is Joe Fraser?"

"He is dead these long yeahs. All the real old root doctuhs are passin on to the beyon." And Nathaniel Lewis sadly stroked his lame arm.

361 We left him standing in his garden and went on down the winding path. On each side, closed away behind their fences,
342 stood the little houses of the town. One was made entirely of old signs; another was merely a battered automobile body

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

TIN CITY

342 with a rickety chimney sending up smoke from the roof.

From the doorway of one of the little tin houses, two heads peered out curiously at us. We stopped and talked for a 115 few minutes with Paul Singleton * and his wife.

The old man told us that he had been born during slavery times on a plantation near Darien. His master had owned about thirty-five plantations in the vicinity. He added that he had been brought to Savannah in 1869.

789 "Muh daddy use tuh tell me all duh time bout folks wut could fly back tuh Africa. Dey could take wing an jis fly 775 off," he confided. "Lots uh time he tell me annudduh story bout a slabe ship bout tuh be caught by revenoo boat. Duh slabe ship slip tru back ribbuh intuh creek. Deah wuz bout fifty slabes on bode. Duh slabe runnuhs tie rocks roun duh slabes' necks and tro um ovuhbode tuh drown. Dey say yuh kin heah um moanin an groanin in duh creek ef yuh goes neah deah tuh-day.

775 "I bin seein ghos all muh life." One time a ghos try tuh 789 skeah me an uh git mad and den he leab me. Muh fus wife is dead, an muh second wife heah kin see uh come roun mos any time. She kin see any uh duh kin folks wut dead.

"Ef I goes tuh duh cimiterry at twelve o'clock at night I kin see any one uh duh dead folks standin at duh head bode uh deah grabe. Den dey settle down an disappeah."

754 Mose Brown ** who lived near by told us, "I bin rid by 787 witches " an seed a thousandn mo ghos." I see um mos any time. Dey jis float long bout two feet frum duh groun. Sometime dey come in a wirlwin.

787 "One day at duh rosin yahd deah come up a wirlwin. I see a big wite man in it. I show im tuh duh udduh men but (845) dey dohn see im. I kin see im cuz uh wuz bawn wid a double (775) caul ' an foot foemos. Dat gib yuh duh powuh tuh see um. A ghos come heah ebry night an peep in duh soouh obuh

* *Paul Singleton, Tin City.*
** *Mose Brown, Tin City.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

deah. He look in duh soouh, walk tuh duh cawnuh, an den disappeah. Any night I'm on dis stoop I kin see im.

"My gran use tuh tell me bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. A man an his wife wuz brung frum Africa. Wen dey fine out dey wuz slabes an got treat so hahd, dey jis fret an fret. One day dey wuz standin wid some udduh slabes an all ub a sudden dey say, 'We gwine back tuh Africa. So goodie bye, goodie bye.' Den dey flied right out uh sight."

"No, I nebuh see no ghos, but uh kin feel em," [89] said another resident of the community. This was Emma Monroe,* an elderly woman who had formerly been a slave on a plantation known as Wilton Bluff Plantation. "Wen a ghos is roun muh haiah rise up on muh head an sumpm tech me an uh feel strange all tru. It's duh same wen witches is roun. Deah's plenty folks roun yuh duh witches ride.[89] Dey kin git in yuh house nebuh mine how yuh shut up.

"Duh ole folks use tuh tell us chillun duh story bout people dat flied off tuh Africa.[89a] I blieb um bout flyin. Some folks kin wuk roots too. Dey hab duh powuh tuh lay down sumpm tuh hahm yuh,[15] an uddubs hab duh powuh tuh moob wut dey done put down fuh yuh.[6] I ain nebuh bin rooted yit, cuz I stay way frum sech people.

"One ting I do blieb in is signs. Ef yuh watch signs, dey alluz mean good aw bad luck tuh yuh. Ef muh lef eye jump, I kin look fuh bad nooz, and ef muh right eye jump, I kin look fuh good nooz. Same ting wen yuh han itch. Yuh lef han mean yuh gwine tuh git a piece uh money; yuh right han say yuh gwine shake hans wid a strainjuh. Wen yuh foot itch, yuh gwine tuh walk on strange lan aw go tuh duh grabeyahd. Dogs an chickens an buds all make signs dat mean sumpm. Ef somebody is comin, a roostuh come right up tuh duh doe an crow. Ef a dog sets up a howlin, somebody in duh neighbuhhood gwine die. A screech owl screechin roun tells yuh somebody neah by gwine die." [44]

* *Emma Monroe, Tin City.*

TIN CITY

754 (115) Christine Nelson,* a middle-aged Negro woman, admitted that she, too, believed in witches and ghosts and that she knew there was a good deal of conjuring going on in the neighborhood.[15]

"Cunjuh is magic some folks is bawn wid," she explained. "It gibs um powuh obuh tings udduh folks dohn unnuhstan.[22a,*] Dey kin wuk dat powuh fuh good aw bad. Dey kin put spells on yuh an lif duh spell some udduh root wukuh hab put on yuh.[6] Ef a root wukuh break yuh spirit, he kin hanl yuh lak he want tuh. A witch is a cunjuh man dat somebody paid tuh tawment yuh. I know uh folks dat wuz rid so much by witches dat dey jis pine way an die."[69b]

(115) The case of a man who had been conjured was described to us by James Moore.** "He jis mope roun—couldn git spirit nuff tuh wuk. Den all ub a sudden he swell up an duh doctuhs couldn tell wut ail im. We tink he gonuh die.[15] Den 754 long come a man we call Professuh.[43] He say ef we kin git 755 any money he kin lif duh spell.[6] We git some money tuhgedduh and he go out in duh stable an wen he come back he hab a lill black sack. He say dis hab duh cunjuh in it.[9a,b] Den he bile up some mullen leaves and bathe muh frien in um. He tell us tuh keep on doin dis. In two weeks duh swellin 754 go down an he all right. Deah's root men wukin gense yuh all duh time. Dey kin lay tings down fuh yuh an ef yuh walk obuh dis, yuh fall unduh duh spell. Less yuh kin fine somebody else wut kin wuk roots an kin lif duh spell,[6] yuh is doomed.

• 788 "I kin see duh spirits uh people fo dey die.[59a] Duh spirit 794 is most lak duh natchul pusson but wen I see it I know dat 763 duh pusson will soon die. Attuh a pusson die, I see duh ghos[56] an sometime dey is lak animals,[54] and den agen lak 775 people, jis floatin long lak a piece uh papuh in duh win. Sometime dey hab no head aw feet an dey's alluz dressed in wite.

* *Christine Nelson, Tin City.*
** *James Moore, Tin City.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 "Witches done ride me plenty times.[69] I spicioned who dey wuz but nebuh could ketch one. Dey alluz tun out tuh be somebody right in yuh neighbuhhood. Yuh kin keep em [789] away by puttin sulphuh roun yuh house aw by placin a knife aw a Bible unduh yuh pilluh.

789 "Deah's lots uh strange tings dat happen. I seen folks disappeah right fo muh eyes. Jis go right out uh sight. Dey do say dat people brought frum Africa in slabery times could disappeah an fly right back tuh Africa. Frum duh tings I see mysef I blieb dat dey could do dis."

763 Ozie Cohen * said that he too saw the spirits of people 774 just before they were about to die.[69a] He told us, "Not long ago a frien uh mine wuz sick. Duh night befo he die I see • 787 his spirit floatin long befo me in duh street. Duh nex day [115] he pass away. Eben aftuh some uh muh friens die, I see deah spirits nuff tuh know em.[69]

776 "Hags worry me too. I see um slide in frum noweah. I 789 try tuh call out, den all at once I'm hepless an strugglin.[69] Ef I membuh tuh put a Bible unduh muh pilluh, dey dohn bodduh me.

789 "I hab heahd duh story bout folks flyin back tuh Africa. 754 I tink it mus be true wen I tink bout how witches kin come tru a keyhole tuhday.[69a]

754 "Yuh heah lots bout roots an fixin.[15] Folks is alluz sayin somebody bin rooted mos anytime somebody git sick fuh a long spell. Den yuh heah dem sayin, duh sickness ain feah. Dey bin rooted."

632 Down one long lane and up another we came upon the two 115 or three-room dwelling of the second mayor, George Boddison,** built on the banks of the old rice canal. Boddison came out of his home to meet us. His wrists and arms were [301] encircled by copper wire strung with good luck charms; * his [789] fingers were covered with several large plain rings. A cop-

* *Ozie Cohen, Tin City.*
** *George Boddison, Tin City.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

We asked about roots.

"I dohn believe in them things," asserted "Stick Daddy." "I dohn believe in nuthin like that. It's too dangerous. But I do believe in some signs. Yuh watch em and yuh'll see that they dohn nevuh fail. If somebody borruh salt frum yuh, 'tis not wise tuh accept it back; 'twill cause trouble. If yuh throw out stove an chimney cleanin aftuh sundown, 'tis sho death."

Fred Jones,* a tall Negro of nearly eighty, with brown complexion and piercing eyes, sternly forbade us to discuss conjure.

"Dohn yuh know," fearfully, "dat yuh might bring trouble on yuhsef? Das ting ain nobody ought tuh mess wid."

"How do you know that?"

"Ain no mattuh how come I knows. I seen it. I seen pusson wid duh powuh tuh tun hesef intuh any shape he got a mine tuh.[68] Dey kin cause yuh plenty trouble an duh only ting kin sabe yuh is tuh git tuh a root man on time." [6, 48]

Our surprise and interest drew him in spite of his fears to speak in a low voice of several instances where he had seen conjure working.

"Deah wuz a man wid duh powuh.[48] He draw a ring roun anudduh man an dat man couldn git out dat ring till duh root man come an wave tuh um. Den deah wuz a uhmun done up so bad by somebody dat ants wuz crawlin out tru uh skin.[50] Wenebuh a pusson go crazy, wut is dat but cunjuh? [15]

"I dohn lak tuh talk bout muhsef, but I caahn nebuh fuhgit duh time I hab a dose put on me by a uhmun uh didn lak. I wuz a good frien ub uh huzbun an she didn lak fuh us tuh go out tuhgedduh; so she tole me not tuh come tuh uh house no mo. I ain pay no tention. Well, suh, duh nex night soon as uh laid down, uh feel muhsef swoon. Ebry night it happen. Dis ting keep up till uh git sick. I couldn eat an jis

* *Fred Jones, 607 West Congress Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 755 den on I git bettuh. A cousin uh mine git a dose once an wen duh root doctuh rub uh all ovuh wid a cleah liquid, bugs begin crawlin out of uh skin.[5, 15] Duh doctuh say if she had wait one mo day it would uh bin too late."

754 "Did your husband ever try any more conjure on you?" She laughed with great amusement. "He sho did. He went tuh duh same man dat cuo me an give him thutty dolluhs tuh make me go back tuh him. One Sunday attuh chuch wen I ain had thought of evuh livin wid muh huzbun agen, I walked out duh chuch straight tuh muh huzbun's house. An dis happen," concluded Ellen, "widout duh root man evuh seein me. I didn know nuthin bout it till long attuh we wuz reconcile."

115 Evans Brown • is only fifty years old. To see him going daily about his duties as janitor of the West Broad Street Negro School, no one would suspect unusual powers at work beneath his good-natured exterior. Yet he not only said that he believed absolutely in the supernatural but proudly asserted that he could work magic himself.

775 787 "It come natchul tuh me, duh powuh tuh do suttn ting. Since I wuz lill I could see ghos, sometime two feet off duh groun, sometime walkin. Wen muh haiah rise on en an hot eah pass muh face, I tun roun an deah's alluz a ghos. Lots uh time it's duh spirit ub a frien. Many wintuh mawnins wen I go tuh school early tuh make fyuhs, uh heah doze open an shut an den uh see duh ghos dat do it.[59]

754 "I didn know I hab powuh tuh do tings till muh mudduh wuz fixed. Yuh know, a man kin fix a dose fuh a suttn pusson an only dat pusson will git caught. Fo women wuz in duh house wid muh mudduh, but duh doe knob wuz dressed fuh huh. All dem women pass out befo she did, all tuhnin duh knob. But wen she come out, a pain strik uh in duh side. We hab doctuhs but nuttn done no good. Uh whole side tun black an she die.[15]

• *Evans Brown, West Broad Street School.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

right at muh side.[59] Ise use tuh um now an it's jis lak natchul people tuh me. Yuh kin skeah witches an ghos ef yuh make a cross mahk. Dis will stop um frum followin yuh."

Seventy-five year old Henry Bates * readily acknowledged a belief in the supernatural. "I done seen all kine uh strange ting happen in muh lifetime. Yuh wahn me tuh tell yuh bout some uh dem ting, missus?

"One night I finished eatin dinnuh. Den I walk tuh duh kitchen doe. I see a strange man comin down duh road; he wuz twenty yahds away. I tun muh head tuh look in duh house an wen uh look back he done disappeahed. I know he mustuh been a ghos.[59]

"Anudduh time I heah a knock on duh doe. I heah it tree times. Bam! Bam! Bam! Wen muh dog heah dat knock, he holluh lak he wuz sked tuh det. I git up an go tuh duh doe an muh haiah riz up on muh head. Wen uh gits tuh duh doe, uh see sumpm as big as a cow, only it look lak a dog.[54] Den it vanish lak a shadduh.

"One night muh wife an me git ready tuh go tuh bed. We fasten duh doe an winduh. Attuh a time we heah a noise. Den we heah a click. Duh winduh come open jis lak somebody open it. I strike a match an uh see a big yulluh cat walkin long side duh bed. It hab a face jis lak a pusson. It go right out duh winduh.

"I fine out latuh dat duh cat wuz a witch.[60] Witches is jis livin people wut bin sole tuh duh debil. Lots uh nights I kin feel em ridin me. Jis duh udduh day I wuz sittin in a cheah an I dozed off tuh sleep. All at once a hag jump on me an staht ridin me.[60]

"Wen I wuz a boy I heah lots uh stories bout people flyin. Some folks brung obuh frum Africa could fly off aw disappeah anytime dey wanted tuh. I alluz belieb dat story.

* *Henry Bates, 1118 West Waldbury Street, Currytown.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

FROGTOWN AND CURRYTOWN

791 I know folks right now dat kin make duh spirits uh dead
(775) people come back.[55]

"Wen I wuz jis growin up I knowd a boy dat hab a strange powuh. Eben ef he wuzn wid duh udduh boys he could tell each one wut he bin doin.[22a,*] One day attuh we grown up he say dat he could bring back folks dat hab lef town an gone away.

791 "Now deah wuz a uhmun whose huzbun hab lef uh. Dis
789 uhmun wuz jis frettin uhsef tuh det. Muh frien go tuh uh an say, 'I will cause yuh huzbun tuh come back tuh yuh. I will chahge yuh ten dolluhs. Yuh needn pay me till he come back, but ef yuh dohn pay me den, he wohn stay.'

"In a week's time duh uhmun's huzbun wuz back. He stay home till he die. Duh uhmun pay muh frien in piece payments till she pay im duh ten dolluhs."

115 Living in a dirt lane on the fringe of Currytown is Chloe West * who was born at White Bluff and cannot remember
(775) her exact age. She told us that she frequently sees ghosts [55] and that a spirit warns her when anything out of the ordi-
(787) nary is about to happen.[22a,*]

"One time I wuz bodduhed by duh folks nex doe wut wuz
754 tryin tuh cunjuh me. Somebody tell me tuh git some hot
775 watuh an tro it wen I heah duh noise. Jis as I git duh
787 watuh hot, duh spirit ub a wite uhmun I use tuh wuk fuh peahed an tell me tuh pray an duh witches would go way.
755 Attuh she spoke, duh witches went out an nebuh did bodduh me since. Duh witches wuz two men. One ub um went crazy an duh poeleece foun duh udduh one out in duh woods. He died in duh po house.

754 "One night I heah a noise at muh winduh. A voice say, 'Chloe, dohn go neah duh winduh.' I stop a minute, den uh go tuh duh winduh. Some kine uh powduh wuz trone in muh face dat bline me.[55] Den duh voice tell me tuh wash muh

* *Chloe West, 623 West Waldburg Lane.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 face quick in karisene. I do dat an duh blineness leab me.

"Anudduh time duh uhmun wut lib nex doe want me tuh moob an she git a cunjuh bag an bury it unduh muh step.[15] Duh spirit wahn me agen an tell me a man would fine duh cunjuh fuh me. Duh nex day Doctuh Johnson, a root 754 man,[48] come by. He say sumpm wuz laid down fuh me an 755 he would take it up fuh fifty cent. I paid him duh money. He come back dat night, dig unduh muh steps, an take out a bunl. It hab some dut an some haiah[10] an sulphuh in it. Doctuh Johnson say it wuz grabe yahd dut.[9] Bin a long time since I bin bodduhed but uh sho belieb in all dem tings.

775 "Duh fus time I ebuh see ghos wuz long yeahs back. Once 787 wen I wuz young an receivin compny, deah wuz two men comin tuh see me. I lak one man duh bes an duh udduh man wuz jealous. Well, duh jealous man die. Aftuh dat many a time uh see a shadduh lak him come right up tuh muh doe an disappeah. One night he come, stretch he ahm cross duh doe, an say jis as plain as anyting in a big loud voice, 'Is dat udduh man still comin roun yuh?' I wuz sked stiff."

754 D. C. Kelsey,* who has been blind for six years, told us [115] that conjure had caused the loss of his sight.

"An I ain had duh money tuh git nobody tuh tun dis ting back on duh one dat put it on me," he complained.

115 He looked pleased when a piece of money was placed in 789 his hand. When we asked why he blew on the coin, he smiled slowly. "Dat make mo luck. It'll hep me tuh git mo. Yuh know, a root man, he wohn take money out yuh han. He tell yuh tuh put it on duh table aw duh shef."

We encouraged him to continue on the subject of root men.

754 "Dey kin fix yuh wid mos anyting," Kelsey said. "Duh [825] chinch bug is use a lot an Ise sked ub em. I wouldn put muh han on dem ting fuh ten dolluhs. I hab a sistuh name Ida Walker wut wuz fix wid candy. She ate duh candy an den

* *D. C. Kelsey, 321 West Gaston Street, Frogtown.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Springfield

ROWS OF FADED GREY HOUSES, HUDDLED CLOSE TOgether and facing on narrow dirt lanes, house the population of Springfield, a Negro community lying west of Savannah near the city waterworks. In the neighborhood are several wooden churches of various denominations, a well constructed modern brick school building, and a number of stores that supply the six hundred odd Negroes of the community.

Many of the houses are shuttered, dim and quiet. So somber an atmosphere prevails that it is easy to imagine the spectral figures that the Negroes claim they see wandering at night along the twisting pathways. It is not surprising to be told of the sinister powers which are constantly at work and against which many inhabitants of this locality are always on guard.

A familiar figure in the neighborhood is James Washington,* famed locally as a fortune teller and root doctor. It is said that Washington's patronage is growing steadily; [22a, c, 48] each day new clients visit his dilapidated house, seeking advice or perhaps a cure for some puzzling ailment that has descended upon them.

The consulting room is smoky, airless, and reeking with a queer pungent odor. The shades are drawn down tightly, and when a visitor is being given advice the door is shut securely against intrusion. The furniture is scant, consisting of a lamp on a plain table, a couch for the visitor, and placed directly across the room a wooden armchair in which sits the dealer in magic. The most remarkable object in the room is

* *James Washington, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

353 a "spirit picture," showing the head of one of the creatures of the "shadduh worl." The eyes are closed, the face bears a rapt, exalted expression, and the picture fades off into a dim mist of clouds.

791 Washington uses no cards or crystals. "I kin tell duh fewchuh jis by lookin at duh pusson," [22a] * he told us, "cuz
787 I wuz bawn wid a double cawl [4] wut wuz sabe fuh me till I wuz grown. Duh spirit show me ebryting. Ain many people hab duh powuh tuh see tings, but I got dis gif frum Gawd.

789 "I hab a deep knowledge uh magic. Deah's magic wut
754 gahd yuh frum hahm an deah's ebil magic wut kin put yuh down sick aw eben kill yuh.[5] Wen yuh bin fix, yuh caahn git well wid regluh medicine.[15] Yuh got tuh git a han gense duh fixin.[6] Magic roots hep a lots.[45] Duh haiah is one uh duh mos powful tings yuh enemy kin git hole ub [10] cuz it grow neah duh brain an a han made outuh haiah kin sho affec duh brain."

754 The credulous neighbors constantly seek Washington's
791 aid, for there is much talk of conjure among them. His recent acquittal on a charge of assault and robbery was interpreted as evidence that he possessed the ability to "fix duh cote so dey couldn nebuh sen im up."

754 We were told of a woman who had a spell cast upon her by
[593] her own sister.[15] Wishing to verify our information, we decided to pay the unfortunate victim a visit.

[351] The house stood at the dead end of a narrow street. A high wall separated it from its neighbors and the barren ground encircling it was littered with refuse, tin cans, and large piles of rocks. A fierce looking dog prowled restlessly near the high arched gateway and bared his teeth at the intruders. At our request a neighbor obligingly called over the fence to the sick woman,* who a moment later came limping towards us.

* *Ryna Bryant, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 Her age was uncertain; she was gaunt and sickly in ap-
115 pearance. Her outfit consisted of a dull gray waist with a
[291] turban to match and a faded blue skirt. Large brass ear-
[301] rings dangled from her ears, making her lean face appear still more woebegone. Certainly there was something wrong with the woman, for she dragged listlessly with the effort of walking the short distance from the house.

We inquired about her health but when we asked about the "cunjuh" which had been put upon her, she looked at us distrustfully, saying, "Muh huzbun tell yuh bout dat." With that she left us abruptly.

[291] Soon the man * appeared, a bent figure in ragged blue overalls, with a battered felt hat on his grizzled head. Unlike his wife, Stephen Bryant was talkative and friendly, and he told us readily of his wife's strange predicament. "She
754 wuz cunjuhed by uh own sistuh," he began. "Some days
[593] she all right an kin cook an clean up; den all at once tings git tuh runnin all obuh uh body.[5] Sometimes she fall down an hab tuh be put tuh bed."

We asked Stephen if he had consulted any root doctors [48] about his wife's condition and he said, "I hab monuh dozen root doctuhs tuh uh but dey dohn do uh no good. I keep on tryin an maybe some day I fine duh right un tuh reach duh cunjuh."

In this instance retribution seemed to have come swiftly, for Stephen told us that the sister who had caused the conjure was now "laid up uhsef wid cunjuh, fuh someone cas a spell on huh too."

•787 When we asked Stephen if he believed in evil spirits, he
775 nodded in affirmation. "I sees um all duh time," he said.
776 "Dey is lill an wite an hab no head.[54, 55] Yuh nebuh see um till attuh duh sun gone down. Yuh dohn bodduh um none an dey leab yuh lone.

"Deah use tuh be a ole house right pas ours. Ebry night

* *Stephen Bryant, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

• 787 we would be woke up by a loud bangin noise. Ef we look
785 out duh winduh we could see dis spirit. He wuz alluz
786 wanduhin roun. Ebry now an den he would tro a rock at a ole gasoline tank an it would make dat noise we heah.[55] We alluz use tuh tink deah wuz buried treasure neah an dis spirit wuz gahdin it.[61] I nebuh did look fuh duh treasure, I dohn wahn tuh fool wid no spirits. Attuh a time dey tuk down duh house an duh spirit nebuh did come back no mo."

754 Another victim of conjure,* a Negro man of about
[115] eighty-eight, told us that although he did not usually believe superstitious tales, his own strange experience had forced him to realize that "folks kin fix yuh." "One time I fall
754 down sick frum a puhculeyuh disease. Nuttn didn do no
755 good till uh hab a root uhmun come in. Right away she tell me a enemy done put down a dose fuh me.[15] She say I wuz fined in fish. Well, den, she tell me tuh drink a haffuh pint uh wiskey and tro way duh udduh res uh duh pint. Attuh uh done dis, uh git well agen.[6]

754 -"I knows a case uh fixin right now. It's a young man wut dohn lib fah frum yuh. He alluz complainin bout crickets crawlin unduh his skin an some uh duh neighbuhs say dey see um. I blieb dis mus be so cuz deah's a uhmun roun yuh wut kin make a han tuh put any kine uh insec in yuh body.[5] She kill duh insec an grine it tuh powduh an rub it on duh skin uh duh pusson aw gib it tuh um tuh drink. Wen it entuh duh body, it tun back intuh insec, sometime a lizud aw a frawg aw a snake."

791 The old man continued, "Ise had plenty sperience bout
759 root wuk,[49] but I alluz try tuh keep way frum dat kine uh folks. I membuh ole Doctuh Sheppard who use tuh op-purate yuh. He hab hunduds uh folks come tuh him day an night. He mustuh been bery good.

"Deah wuz a uhmun name Clara an she wuz good too. She use tuh ketch lots uh Doctuh Sheppard's customuhs. I

* *Charles Singleton, Springfield.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 with another woman * in the community, we again discussed the subject of conjure. This woman told us, "Deah's plenty cunjuh in dis neighbuhhood. Deah wuz a man and his wife libed yuh. Duh man couldn git wuk an he went away. Attuh he lef, duh wife wuz took sick; dey say she wuz cunjuhed,[15] an dey sen fuh duh huzbun. Wen he git home he git a root doctuh tuh visit uh.[48] Duh root man go tuh duh back step an dig a hole, an deah he fine nails an sulphuh an haiah an some grabeyahd dut. In duh pilluhs an mattresses an in duh dressuh draws, dey fine duh same ting. Dem tings run uh crazy. She ack queah an run away an stay fuh days
(755) at a time. Duh root doctuh moob duh cunjuh an she wuz
(789) cuod. He gie uh duh powuh tuh disappeah an appeah any time she want tuh. I heah bout lots uh folks wut kin disappeah lak dat. Duh ole folks use tuh tell bout duh people wut could take wing an fly right back tuh Africa.[49]

775 "I alluz know deah wuz witches an ghos. Attuh I gits
789 married muh huzbun tell me dat he sees ghos.[50] He describe duh ghos tuh me. It wuzn long fo I wuz seein duh ghos too. Sometime he would say tuh me, 'Deah go a spirit. It jis floatin long, ain got no head.' Sho nuff, deah I would see a shadduh floatin by me.

"Sometime muh huzbun see duh spirit uh some frien ub ours. Dat wuz a sho sign sumpm gwine happen tuh dat pusson, eeduh sickness aw det. One day he see a ghos ub a
(763) olose frien uh his. Duh nex day he git a tiligram wut say duh frien wuz dead.

754 "I knowd folks dat wuz witches; dey nebuh bodduhed me
791 but jis picked on muh huzbun. Ain a night hahdly pass wen dey ain ride im.[51] Deah wuz a uhmun libed on duh same street we did. We use tuh call uh An Sally, duh cunjuh uhmun. She could tell fawchuns[52] an gib hans[52a, d] an fix
754 yuh enemies fuh yuh. She ain seem tuh like muh huzbun. Ef she pass our house durin duh day, dat night she come an

* *Dorothy Johnson, 1801 Murphy Avenue.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

757 825 I make a medicine out uh duh spiduh[5] by stooin eel skin in lahd wid it. Wen dis is done, I hab a saave dat will stop any kine uh pain. On duh iluns, specially St. Catherine, duh spiduh is hel in high regahd by some uh duh people.[53]

757 "I make muh medicine out uh King Physic root, an Indian Ash, an Tukish Wine. Wen I wuz a boy I lun many tings frum duh ole people bout herbs dat wuz good fuh diffunt ailments. Deah wuzn so many doctuhs in dem days. We hab tuh fine remedies fuh our sickness an know how tuh cuo snake bite aw cuts an boils, eben female complaints. So I lun wut herbs tuh use fuh deze ailments too.

(752) "I kin cuo any rattlesnake bite in twenty-fo hours. Duh remedy is King Physic, tuhpentine, an wiskey. Attuh duh pizen is kill, gib em plenty sweet milk an ebryting will be all right in twenty-fo hours.

(237) (825) "Duh spiduh web is good fuh stoppin duh blood wen anybody git cut. I make a saave by stooin physic vine leaves an talluh an spiduh tuhgedduh. Dis saave will relieve any bruise aw ole so. It draw all duh pizen out uh duh so.[48a, b]

795 789 "Tuh keep ghos away, missus, yuh hab tuh go in duh woods an fine a tree dat wuz strik by lightin, an git some uh duh bahk an put some unduh duh doe step an carry a piece in yuh pocket. No ghos would ebuh bodduh yuh agen. I done dat an ain been bodduh since. Now all yuh hab tuh do tuh keep witches frum ridin yuh is keep a Bible unduh yuh pilluh at night."[13]

759 757 [15] 278 Another root doctor * in the section told us that he had been born with a special knowledge of healing and had studied the science of herbs from the time he was a small boy.[48] Some of the herbs he uses in his mixtures are Golden Seal, Yellow Dust, Golden Thread, Hippo Root, Pink Root, Lady Slipper, Yellow Root, Blood Root, Rattlesnake Master, Black Snake Root, and John the Conqueror.

(787) "I know in a dream," he said, "jis wen a patient is comin

* *George W. Little, 737 West 34th Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

759 759 784 to consult me an I know head uh time zackly wut kine uh herbs tuh gadduh in awduh tuh cuo im."

He had been born with this power to foretell the future, 787 he asserted.[22a, c] "Outside uh dreams," he went on, "I kin use leaves an coffee grouns an a suttn kine uh seed known as duh sensitive aw jumpin seed. Yuh fine deze seeds at suttn times long duh sho uh duh Wes Indies. Yuh hab tuh keep duh seeds in a closed containuh aw dey will jis disappeah. Tuh tell fawchuns yuh spread duh seeds out fo yuh on duh groun an dey'll moob bout. Dey moob cawdn tuh wut yuh tinkin. Tellin fawchuns is jis a mattuh uh concentratin yuh imagination on suttn tings. Den ebryting will appeah fo yuh."[22b-d]

754 Conjure is being practiced all the time, the root doctor informed us. "Frawgs an lizuds an sech tings is injected intuh people's bodies an duh people den fall ill an sometime die.[5, 15] Udduh strange tings is happenin, too. Take duh 789 story uh dem people wut fly back tuh Africa. Das all true. Yuh jis hab tuh possess magic knowledge tuh be able tuh cumplish dis.[69c] Not long ago I see a man vanish intuh tin eah by snappin his finguhs. Hab yuh heahd uh duh man wut wuz put in prison in Springfield? He jis flied away frum duh jail an wuz nebuh caught agen.[69b, 69c] Yes, ma'am, I know wut yuh hab tuh hab in awduh tuh fly aw vanish away, but it is mighty hahd tuh git. It's duh bone ub a black cat."

(115) A woman* informant, too, had heard about flying Africans and persons who could disappear at will.[69c] She said also that she had often been ridden by witches. "Dey seem tuh come frum noweah an staht chokin yuh.[69] Witches an root men hab duh same magic powuh."

764 Relative to the custom of placing food and possessions on a new grave this woman spoke earnestly. "Dis wuz a common ting wen I wuz young. Dey use tuh put duh tings a (775) pusson use las on duh grabe.[47] Dis wuz suppose tuh satisfy

* *Florence Postell, 988 West 51st Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 come ebry night lak a rabbit an rode a woman. A man wut knowd duh woman laid a trap fuh duh witch. Duh witch scape frum duh house, but duh dogs track uh down. Wen she see she wuz caught, she beg duh man not tuh do nuttn tuh uh an she wouldn nebuh do no mo witchin."

775 A Negro preacher * in a near by section said that he had
• 787 been in the habit of seeing ghosts all his life.[56, 59] "Once wuz
(115) jis aftuh muh fathuh died. I saw him all dressed up an weahin a Stetson hat. I called muh mothuh an said, 'Mothuh, heah come Papa.' Wen I tun roun, he wuz gone.

"Aftuh I marry I moob out by duh watuh wuks. A frien uh mine name Arthur Perry die. Some time latuh anothuh frien die. One night I wuz lyin down wen I heah a noise. I look up an deah wuz two men all dressed up in wite, walkin cross dat room. As I watch em dey begin tuh shrink till dey wuzn no bigguhn dawls. Den dey disappeah. I see ghos mos any time, so Ise used to it now."

754 That he was frequently visited by both witches and ghosts
775 was the assertion of another man.** "Duh witches come in an strangle me," [59] he said, "but duh ghos yuh jis see, an no hahm come frum um. Jis las night attuh I gone tuh bed a ghos come in muh house.[59] I hab tuh git up an run im out. Sometime dey pull duh cubbuh right off muh bed."

754 The same man said considerable conjuring was being practiced in the neighborhood, but that he kept a careful distance from people who were believed to be able to "do tings tuh yuh." [15]

"Yuh see," he volunteered, "I hab muh leg fix once. Dat wuz back in 1893. Fus muh foot swell up, den muh leg. It wuz so bad I couldn walk. A man tole me tuh go tuh Doctuh
(757) Buzzud, a root doctuh.[49] Doctuh Buzzud gimme some root medicine an in no time I wuz all right." [6]

* *Harry Higgins, 1810 West Broad Street.*
** *Albert Jenkins, 627 West 36th Street.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

775 (764) they buried frum home. The spirit jist wanduh aroun.[1]

"I have seen something I think wuz a ghost. I have no explanation of it, but I think it wuz supuhnatural. I have heard of witchcraft, cunjuh an magic. I believe some of these things happen, and the mo yuh probe intuh them the less yuh know.

789 "I have heard about a magic hoe that folks put in the gahden. They speak certain words tuh it; then the hoe goes ahead an cultivates the gahden without anyone touching it. They jist tell it tuh do the wuk and it does it." [38]

775 789 We questioned Collier again about his personal experiences with supernatural beings and he related the following story:

"Wen I wuz jist a young boy muh family use tuh live in Currytown. Me and muh brothuh use tuh go and see muh aunt who lived in Yamacraw. Tuh get frum our house tuh wheah she lived we had tuh go past a cemetery which wuz in back of the Union Station.

"One time we had been tuh see muh aunt and it got tuh be late. We stahted fuh home. It wuz beginnin of night. Muh brothuh he had rheumatism an he wuz hobblin along on a stick. We stahted along by a fence tuh get tuh West Broad Street an wen we had gone about a hundred yards we saw a lady comin tuhwards us.[39] She wuz very feah, very feah, an she wuz all dressed in black and had on a long black veil. Her dress wuz black silk and rustled as she walked.

"Muh brothuh an I, we were suhprised tuh see the lady all of a sudden, fuh we hadn't noticed her befo. She come up tuh us an she say, 'Are yuh goin roun the fence?' We tell her we wuz an she say, 'Yuh not afraid?' an we say, 'No—we not afraid.'

"The lady wanted tuh walk with us an we all staht walkin along. We had gone a short ways wen all of a sudden we look in the cemetery an we see a little white thing risin up out of the groun. It wuz kinduh hazy an shadowy an it

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

775
•787

spring up from the groun an streak out tuh meet us on the path ahead. It looked like a lill animal.[54]

"The lady, wen she see the lill white sumpms a comin, she daht out like lightin an she go right tuh meet it. Wen she get tuh it she disappeah right intuh the eah, disappeah right befo our eyes. Muh brothuh fuhgot he wuz crippled, he drop his stick an staht runnin, an I run too. An we nevuh stop runnin, kept right on goin till we got home tuh Currytown. He don't like to speak of it tuhday cause we're not supuhstitious."

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

777 356 duh flo git duhty agen by duh night time an yuh sweep duh flo, yuh musn sweep duh dut out duh house, but yuh hab tuh sweep it behine duh doe till mawnin.

(533) " 'Tis bad luck fuh girls tuh wistle. It will suttnly lead tuh misfawchun. Yuh should nevuh put noo bodes on a ole house but yuh should git a ole bode das good tuh men duh place dat yuh hab tuh fix. An nevuh put anudduh ruhm on a house das already buil. It sho mean bad luck, eeduh sickness aw det tuh some uh yuh fambly aw close friens, wen yuh heah duh owl holluh by yuh house.[44] Now yuh kin watch it. I ain see it fail yet."

777 825

436 789 The custom of spitting on money is a very old one, it seems. This, he explained, will cause it to "stick tuh yuh aw it will draw mo tuh yuh."

115 Strolling down the sandy road with an ax across his shoulder and a dog at his heels, Jack Waldburg * hastily removed his hat at the sight of us. He is of medium height and slightly bent; his hair and beard are quite gray but his sprightly appearance belies the eighty years he claims.

He greeted us cordially, listened attentively to what we had to say, and answered without hesitation.

"Yes, missis, I bawn an raise in dis paht uh duh country, down at Cherry Hill in Bryan County. But I bin libin roun yuh bout tutty yeahs. Muh gran wuz a African. Das weah he come frum an he name wuz Buck Waldburg. He dahk in culluh an medium high wid strong buil. He hab long haiah. But granmudduh, she from deah, too, an she feah. She duh one wut lun me tuh make medicine frum root.[45b] She a midwife an tell me duh kine tuh use. I dohn make it no mo cuz I ain got a license."

(759)

754 We asked if conjure were practiced by root men.

759 "No'm, I dohn know nuttn bout cunjuh. Some folks say dey kin wuk it but it bad an I dohn fool wid um.

•787 "Now spirits is diffunt. Deah is good un an bad un.[58a]

* *Jack Waldburg, Tatemville.*

TATEMVILLE

787 I caahn see um but uh feels um. Sometime wen folks is comin tuh me I kin tell dey comin fo I see um, an wen yuh die yuh head tun backwud.[57] Soon's yuh die it tun roun.

787 775 (231) (845) "Duh folks frum Africa could see um. Dey natchul bawn dat way. An wite dogs![46] Dey alluz kin see spirit. Muh brudduh Simon he bawn wid a caul an he see um an play wid um.[4] Dey would climb trees an he climb attuh um so muh mudduh give um some tea made frum caul uh women an bline um tuh um."

218 We endeavored to gain some information as to the ingredients of this tea but the only explanation was that the concoction was more effective when made from cauls of women.

764 533 He could remember nothing as to the use of drums at funerals or other gatherings but his eyes twinkled when we turned the conversation to a culinary line.

252 "Ma would make ash cake," he recalled. "She would mix duh cawnmeal, den open duh oak ashes an spread in some hickory leaves, den put duh cawnmeal on duh leabes an cubbuh wid mo leabes, den put duh hot ashes an coals on duh top. Wen it done, she take duh bread frum duh ashes an rub it wid a rough clawt aw brush an it would be pretty an brown. Dis," he concluded smacking his lips, "wuz bery fine wid fat meat aw surup."

775 787 (115) (759) Justine Singleton* believed firmly in the existence of spirits as verified by her statement. "Yes, wen I wuz sick muh sistuh das dead come tuh me an I knowd dat it wuz huh an she done talk tuh me. She tole me tuh git some weepin willuh an bile it an make a wash fuh muh feet." This, she explained is an excellent remedy for foot ailments. "I done talk tuh duh spirits many times. Sometime I gib em sumpm. I caahn tell yuh no mo now cuz I caahn git muh mine tuhgedduh."

115 759 In this locality stands a small one-room structure occu-

*Justine Singleton, Tatemville.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

115 759 pied by an old man and his dog, between whom there is a touching devotion. In addition to other means of livelihood, he follows the profession of root doctor. "I kin cuo any kine uh sickness das put on yuh. An," he added, "I kin tell wut • [787] a man want. Soon's uh see im his spirit come tuh me. I lay down an sleep an know wen somebody want me. Deah spirit come an wake me. Many times uh go an fine em lookin fuh me."

115 This man, whose name is Allen Parker * is unusually adept with his hands, as shown by his skill in mending clocks, watches, and firearms, in making chairs, baskets, piggins, bread trays, spoons and forks,[70d] and in carving figures of such animals as snakes, lizards, frogs, dogs, alligators and rabbits.[50b]

829 In reference to native Africans, he declared that he had known many of them but that few were left in this vicinity although he thought some might be found around Darien.

115 It was with difficulty that Rosanna Williams ** was persuaded to talk. She was suspicious and reticent and lived behind tightly locked doors in a house that to all appearance was deserted. After much coaxing she cast aside some of her mistrust and grudgingly responded to our friendly gestures.

"Muh name is Rosanna Williams. Muh pa wuz Lonnon Dennerson. He frum duh ole country. Muh granpa wuz 'Golla' Dennerson, King uh his tribe. Wen muh pa wuz a lill boy, him an muh granpa wuz fool away wid a red hankuh-chuh. Dey wuz sole tuh Chahls Grant on one uh duh iluns 115 roun Brunswick. Muh pa wuz six foot tall an on is furud 304 wuz a scah bout dis big." [14] She indicated the end of her forefinger.

We questioned her more closely regarding this mark which

* *Allen Parker, Tatemville.*
** *Rosanna Williams, Tatemville.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

duh seamstress fuh duh slabes. She make mos all dey weah."

When we asked her if she ever heard that dreaming about a snake "meant anything," the old woman replied, "Yes, ma'am, dat mean yuh got a enemy.[51] Not many nights ago I dream bout a snake an uh sho wuz sked wen uh wake up."

They both laughed and Susie leaned over and tapped Sophie on the arm and said, "Oh yes, deah's lots uh dem tings bout babies. Wen dey bawn wid a caul, das sho a sign dey will be bery wise an kin talk wid duh spirits.[4] Ain dasso, Sophie?"

Agreeing, Sophie hastened to add what she had heard about babies born with teeth. "Dey will hab bad luck all deah libes.[66] Dat sho wuk out. Deah wuz one boy bawn dat way wut lib right yuh in Wite Bluff an he wine up by bein in duh chain-gang an dat sho nuff bad luck."

"But dis lill plant heah called 'Cherokee' is spose tuh bring good luck ef yuh plants it by duh front doe step,"[34a] said Susie.

In this community as in many others strangers are not allowed to be buried in the local cemetery but in what is known as the "strangers lot," a piece of ground set apart from the cemetery proper. The custom of bringing the dead back to their original home for interment is also prevalent throughout coastal Georgia. The body of a young man who recently died in New York was brought back to White Bluff for burial. Relative to this custom, Susie spoke quietly. "Dey alluz brings um back tuh bury um ef dey kin git duh money, cuz yuh see duh spirit'll jis wanduh roun an nebuh be satisfied lessn it brung back home tuh be buried."[1]

"I know Lunnon Grayson know all bout dem tings too. Yuh tun off tuh duh lef at duh fus road leadin off frum duh highway yuh. Ax anybody den, an dey'll tell yuh wich is his house. He use tuh lib on St. Catherines too, but he come up yuh long fo me an Susie," Sophie said.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

789 "Muh gran say ole man Waldburg down on St. Catherine own some slabes wut wuzn climatize an he wuk um hahd an one day dey wuz hoein in duh fiel an duh dribuh come out an two ub um wuz unuh a tree in duh shade, an duh hoes wuz wukin by demsef. Duh dribuh say 'Wut dis?' an dey say, 'Kum buba yali kum buba tambe, Kum kunka yali kum kunka tambe,' quick like. Den dey rise off duh groun an fly away. Nobody ebuh see um no mo. Some say dey fly back tuh Africa. Muh gran see dat wid he own eye."

556 782 He had heard that on Blackbeard Island it was customary in the old days for a group of men to agree upon a location in which to bury their money, whereupon one of them would voluntarily offer his life and be put to death at the hands of the others, thereby enabling his spirit to stand guard and protect the treasure.

775 776 787 "I seen a spirit muhsef once wen I wuz a young man," Prince continued. "It wuz late in duh aftuhnoon. I wuz cookin crab an uh look up an see a man widout a head. I look away, den uh look back tuh weah uh see im, an sho nuff deah he is in plain sight. I rush tuh duh house an staht tuh tell muh fostuh mudduh but she stop me. She dohn wahn me tuh talk bout it. Den duh nex day she ax me wut uh see an fix me sumpm tuh drink an I nebuh did see no mo spirit."

754 [115] Another woman in the community, Bessie Royal,* in relation to her belief in witchcraft and conjure said, "Lots uh people roun yuh say dat hags ride um at night.[69] None ub um ebuh bodduhed me. Dey say dat duh hags is libe folks wut hab duh powuh tuh change demsefs intuh animals an insecs an any udduh ting dey want tuh be.[68]

"I dohn know how it wuz done but muh faduh wuz cunjuhed [15] by a suttn uhmun dat wuz said to be a hag.[69] He go crazy sometimes an ack lak he wuz sked by sumpm chasin im. He git wus and dey take im tuh a root doctuh. Duh root doctuh say he wuz cunjuhed. He hab us ketch a wite chicken [755]

* *Bessie Royal, White Bluff.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 wich he split open wile duh chicken wuz still libe. He place
755 dis chicken, blood an all wile it wuz still wome, on top uh muh faduh head an boun it deah.

"Well, muh faduh git bettuh fuh a wile. Den all at once he hab anudduh attack an he die befo duh doctuh could git tuh im. Attuh dis I belieb in cunjuh mo dan ebuh."

115 Later that same day we visited a small Negro cabin set deep in the woods some distance from the highway. Here lived Serina Hall,* born eighty-eight years ago on St. Catherines Island and a former slave of Jacob Waldburg. She said that when she was a small child her master had brought the members of her family to Savannah to be employed as house servants.

The old woman at first disclaimed any knowledge of conjure or the existence of supernatural creatures. After a time, however, her attitude changed and she launched into a lengthy discussion of the current beliefs.

795 "I dohn lak tuh talk bout dem tings," she began, "but I hab tuh belieb wut muh eyes see. I membuh once a man uh knew well got kill. Attuh he wuz buried his s[illegible] it use tuh (787) folluh me all duh time. I feel a heat come tuh me, den uh look roun, an deah a shadduh ub a man pass by. I ax duh spirit, 'Wut you want?' Den it leab me lone an I ain seen dat spirit sence." [58, 59]

754 We asked Serina if she had ever known any conjure workers and she said, "Witches an root men is duh same ting. Dey kin tun demsefs intuh any shape, a insec, a cat, aw a dog, aw any kine uh animal.[66] Dey kin go tru any kine uh hole tuh git at yuh.

"Tuh tun intuh sumpm else dey hab tuh hab duh powuh tuh take off deah skin. I heahd bout somebody watchin a hag take off is skin. He git some salt an peppuh an rub it on duh skin.[69a] Wen duh hag go tuh put is skin back on, duh salt an peppuh bun so he couldn git it on. Duh folks wuz

* *Serina Hall, White Bluff.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

skinned, proud, upstanding and loyal, suspicious of strangers but generous and trusting to friends (Plate VIII, IX, X). Most of the very old inhabitants have died in the past decade, so that to have reached the age of sixty places a man or woman in the patriarchal class. The grown people between twenty-five and thirty, are still close to the traditions and beliefs in which they have been reared. Firmly believing in the Bible, they still are aware of other beliefs and customs handed down by their parents and grandparents.

A pleasant, intelligent woman * of about forty-five chatted with us. "Cose, det is duh will ub God, but dey do say jis duh same wen a pusson die, 'Maybe somebody fix em' [15] aw 'I sho know dat uhmun wuz rooted.' I ain nebuh bought no powduh muhsef but jis day befo yestuhdy a uhmun frum Tatemville wuz right yuh tuh dis house sellin High John duh Conqueruh fuh fifty cent an she sho say it would bring yuh powuhful good luck, but I ain hab fifty cent.[8]

"Cose, it ain good tuh fool much wid dem tings, but yuh sho hab tuh be keahful not tuh let no enemy git hole uh yuh haiah combins cuz dey say dey sho could fix yuh den." [10] She laughed a little uneasily. "Ef yuh dream ub a snake dassa enemy neahby too, but ef yuh weah a snake skin roun yuh wais, it good fuh wut ail yuh.[504] * An ef uh enemy come tuh yuh house an yuh dohn wahn im deah no mo, yuh jis take duh bruhm an sweep out quick attuh im. Den sprinkle a lill salt on duh flo weah his foot track bin an sweep em all out duh doe an he sho wohn come back no mo."

At this point in her narrative a swarm of barefoot children, black and with shining eyes, clustered around us. One and all were eating crabs, biting into the soft part of the body shell or cracking a claw with strong white teeth. Word had evidently just gone out that some excitement was brewing. Strangers had come and were talking to "Miz Minnie." If anything was going on they didn't want to miss it.

* *Minnie Dawson, Pin Point.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 heah uh movin bout an moanin an in duh mawnin she is jis bout wone out an uh haiah is all tangled. Sometime she wake up an drive him away, but some nights he come back two aw three times an ride uh. In duh mawnin she jis too tied tuh go tuh wuk.*

"Deah wuz a ole woman in Savannah dat dey say wuz a witch. One night a ole man wake up an foun dis witch ridin im.[49] He say it look lak a bug.[48] He ketch it an break off duh leg at duh joint. Duh nex mawnin he go an see duh ole woman an sho nuff she have uh han all tie up wid a bandage. Dey tell me bout uh an I go see uh. Uh finguh wuz right off at duh joint."

775 Spirits of the dead often wander along the dark roadways,[56, 59] and frequently some belated stroller runs screaming in terror, declaring that he is being pursued.** The spirits may appear as misshapen men or women, as sheep, dogs, and cats.[54, 55] A spirit need not always assume the same appearance but may change form entirely each time.†

775 The following story was told by a woman in the community:

•787 "I sho believe in spirits. I have seen em wid muh own eyes. One evenin jis as it wuz gittn dusty I wuz goin in tuh town tuh see duh dressmakuh. I walk tuh duh cah tracks an deah sittin on a rail wuz a lill tiny man, bout long as dis. I nevuh seen sech a lill man.[54b, 55] He wuz so lill he ain good fuh nuthin. I look at im hahd. On his head wuz a lill tin lamp wut gleamed in duh dahk. He wuz kine of an Indian culluh. He wuz a grown man fuh sho fuh he hab a lill mustache. I holluh fuh a man tuh come out an see wut I foun, but wen he git deah duh lill man hab disappeah. Jis den duh cah blowed an I hab tuh leab.

"Wen I gits home dat night, it wuz real dahk. I ain goin tuh walk dat dahk road by mysef an I holluh fuh every man

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Ibid.*
† *Ibid.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

SANDFLY

I knowd dat live neahby. I make em all walk home wid me, but deah wuzn no signs of duh lill man.

"Attuh dat lots of folks say dey see im. Wen duh moon is noo an deah is a drizzle, he come walkin along wid his lill lamp. He take all kine uh shapes. Sometime he's a man an sometime he's a animal.[54] Dey say he's comin roun cuz deah's buried treasure neah yuh." * 81

Here in this little Negro community there seem to be few phases of life left untouched by superstitious fears. As one woman aptly expressed it—"Everything that happen is cause by cunjuh an magic. They jis dohn leave nuthin tuh Gawd." **

* *Lee Baynes, Sandfly.*
** *Lizzie Jenkins, Sandfly.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Grimball's Point

GRIMBALL'S POINT, LYING AT THE NORTHWESTERN end of the Isle of Hope on the marshes and creeks that run from the wide Skidaway River, is one of the characteristic spots of Savannah's rural landscape. The lowland spreads grassy flats against the horizon; the squawks of marsh hen rise from the long reeds on Grimball's Creek; all the year round a familiar sight is the Negro fisherman sitting patiently in his small bateau or trudging with his plump catch up an old oak-shaded shell road.

A few white residents maintain comfortable summer homes at Grimball's Point, but the settlers scattered on the southern part of the point are Negroes, former slaves and descendants of slaves who once worked the great plantations on the Isle of Hope and other near-by islands. Some of the inhabitants are employed on Grimball's Point hunting preserve, while others are farmers or fishermen. Their abodes are frame bungalows with front porches or little shacks of one or two rooms, but most of the dwellings are surrounded by sun-dappled yards, fenced with boards or chicken wire. Each has its backyard pump as there is no running water.

Of the ten Negro families on the point, young and old believe in signs and auguries. "Catfish Tom" William, Habersham Gibson, and Solomon Gibson professed to know that "some signs sho do wuk." Thomas Tuten, who has spent his fifty-eight years on the island, warned us that "yuh sho has tuh watch people cuz dey kin do yuh." Aging Aunt Cinda Smith, employed on the old Wiley place, is given the respect

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

•787 of all the settlers as one who can read signs and interpret dreams.

115 Solomon Gibson's wife, Mary Liza,* a slender black woman of about forty, came to the island from Skidaway upon her marriage. She was an amiable person, not at all disinclined to an interview.

787 [777] "I kin cook and wash an ion an make baskets an do anything roun duh house," she said. "Yes, I belieb in many signs. Yuh musn sweep out duh doe aftuh dahk an it bad luck tuh [763] split a tree wen yuh's walkin. Deah's two signs uh det. Ef [825] duh dog holluhs aw a owl holluhs,[44b] somebody is gonuh die. I lun all dis frum duh ole people an I know it's true."

115 Bruurs Butler,** well past three score and ten, worked for "Capm Wiley" for nearly thirty years and is still an able field hand. He owns his small house, which is equipped with electricity and a radio.

"I wuz bawn on DeRenne place," he told us, "an my mothuh an fathuh wuz owned by Mistuh DeRenne. My fathuh wuz a second sergeant in the Confederate Ahmy. None of us lef duh plantation aftuh duh waw. I wuk crops fuh Mistuh DeRenne till I wuz a young man."

829 We asked if there had been any Gullah Negroes on the Isle of Hope in the old days and he nodded.

"Use tuh be many 'Golla' people roun yuh but dey all died [789] out. Dey tell me them people could do all kine uh curious tings. Dey could make fahm tools wuk fuh um jis by talkin tuh um.[39a] An," he added soberly, "some of um could disappeah at will.[39c] Wist! And dey'd be done gone.

787 [777] "Yuh askin me bout signs? Well," he appeared amused, "yuh'll fine that ef yuh believe sumpm is bad luck an yuh look fuh bad luck, yuh gonuh fine bad luck. Deah's some signs that come frum Gawd, though, and these is unfailin. Lak dreams an foewahnin not tuh do dis aw dat."[22a]

* *Mary Liza Gibson, Grimball's Point.*
** *Bruurs Butler, Grimball's Point.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

drum an fife an we made duh drum frum holluh beehive lawg.[35b] I tell yuh how we done it. Yuh cut duh lawg an tak a deah hide an stretch obuh duh hole. Den yuh cut a hoop ban dat could lock roun duh lawg. Den yuh cut strips uh deah hide an make bans tuh hole duh head cuvvuh tight. How yuh make duh fife? Well, yuh jis cut reed cane.

"Lots uh udduh tings we make our ownsef," said the old man. "All duh fishin cawd made out uh deah hide, and we make mos uh duh house needs sech as cheahs an tables, baskets an buckets an stools, an sometime spoons an beds and cubbuds. Oh, deah's much I caahn tell off han."

Jackson's wife, who was not many years past middle age, came in about this time, greeted us, and sat down to listen.

"Wut dis bout signs?" Jackson laughed. "Sho I knows a few. Deah's some dat foetell wut comin. Wen yuh see duh hawgs bring straw in deah mouf, it's a sho sign wintuh goin tuh be cole. Ef duh roostuh come in duh doe an crow an den go out, it's sho sign uh sorruh in dat house. Duh owl is a true messenjuh uh det,[44] an wen yuh see a bunch uh crows flock up, yuh jis watch out fuh a fewnul. Deah's many signs an wunduhs. Duh Bible tell us so. I had a buckeye fuh many yeahs dat keep off bad luck. I use tuh have a hawse shoe ovuh duh doe uh duh ole house wut bun down,[11a] but I ain put one on dis un yet.

"Rootn?" he shook his head disdainfully. "I seen duh root man say he tak wuhrums an pins an tings out uh people, but I belieb it's some trick. I ain got no fait in dat stuff."

"But I have," put in his wife.* "Muh brothuh-in-law wuz fixed by his wife.[15] Not muh sistuh but anothuh woman. He tun intuh a invalid an laid down helpless fuh twenny-five yeahs. None uh the medical doctuhs couldn hep im, an several root doctuhs wuz called in.[48a] One of um said nuthin couldn be done fuh im cuz the pusson that put im in this fix wuz dead an theah wuzn nobody tuh throw it back tuh. So

* *Della Jackson, Grimball's Point.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

ting on the front porch of Liza Basden's * small, compactly constructed brown house, we listened to her comments about the prevailing beliefs and customs. The scene before us was restful. The garden planted at the sides and front of the house was enclosed by a low wire fence. Within this enclosure a number of dogs and chickens scuttled about. At a short distance from the house stood an iron pump and an immense rusted iron pot, probably used in the past for boiling clothes. On all sides as far as the eye could see were vast stretches of green land, shaded by massive-trunked, moss-draped trees and covered with an abundance of semi-tropical foliage and underbrush. Here and there could be glimpsed the slanting roofs of neighboring houses.

When we first arrived Liza, a pretty golden-skinned, rather heavy-set woman about eighty years of age, and a small black grandchild were the only occupants of the porch. She told us she had recently come home from a visit to children in the North. Presently her husband and a daughter approached without speaking and sat down unobtrusively in a corner. For the most part they listened to the conversation, contributing only an occasional remark.

"I wuz bawn with a caul," Liza told us, pausing in her task of peeling and eating figs from the pan that she held in her lap. "That means I see ghos.[4] Least I could see em till aftuh I stop havin chillun. Then I stop seein em.

"Three of my chillun they bawn with cauls too. They wuz always skedduh than othuhs. They wuz always fraid of the dahk an nevuh lak tuh go off by themselfs. I nevuh know jis wut they see."

"What did the ghost that you saw look like?" we inquired.

A reflective expression crossed Liza's round pleasant face and she nodded her gray head with its neatly pinned braids.

"They peah jis as nachral as anybody. Most of em ain got no heads. Jis go right along down the path.[5] One time

* *Liza Basden, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

I see a man go right down that path theah. I go out tuh see who he wuz an all of a sudden he disappeah. Theah wuzn't no foot tracks aw nuthin. I nevuh see im no mo. I think maybe he wuz gahdin buried treasure.[61]

"Anothuh time I look out in the yahd an theah wuz a hawg jis a eatin up the cawn.[54b] That wuz the biggest hawg I evuh did see. He stand theah an keep eatin an eatin. I run an tell muh huzbun an he drop wut he wuz doin an come runnin. Wen we git theah, the hawg done disappeah. Theah wuzn't no sign of im an the cawn wuz all right theah. It didn't look lak anybody bin eatin on it uhtall.

"Then one time I see a crowd of cows in the field.[54b] Theah wuz a big bull in the middle. They wuz jis a cuttin down the cawn. Theah wuz a big empty space weah they have already eat. I run tuh weah muh brothuh wuz an tell im tuh come quick. We run weah the cows wuz but wen we git theah, they have all vanished. They wuz all gone. Theah wuz no tracks an all the cawn wuz grown back. All of a sudden I feel a terrible pain. I could hahdly git tuh the house. That's the way it is bout the spirits. Ef yuh tell yuh see em an they disappeah an no one else can see em, then it cause yuh tuh git sick."

After a while Liza remembered an incident that had been related to her by her grandfather and she told us, "Muh gran, he see a deah come down the bluff. He run quick an jump on his back. The deah run all aroun the woods. He teah an scratch an try tuh shake muh gran off. He couldn do it. Finally he run intuh the rivuh. Muh gran jump off an make it tuh the sho. He wuz so tired he wuz mos dead."

Was there no protection against the visits of these creatures from the spirit world, we wanted to know. All of the little group assembled on the porch shook their heads and mumbled a reply.

"Yes'm, mos of the folks carry sumpm fuh pruhtection,"[8] said Liza. "These keep othuh folks frum wukin cun-

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

527 crops. We all gib tanks fuh duh crop an we dance an sing." [38]

115 Shortly after this she again fell to mumbling and muttering unintelligibly and seemed unwilling to be drawn again into the conversation. She did confide in us that she had lived in her house for over fifty-eight years and she proudly displayed her immaculate blue outfit which she said her daughter had recently purchased for her. As it was growing late and we had other interviews to obtain in the vicinity, we concluded our visit. The two women urged us to return soon. Setting out again to make an uncertain jagged path across the field, we looked back and saw Josephine, a rather tragic tall figure huddled at the end of the porch. The daughter waved gaily. Her gold earrings glinted in the sun.

When we found Anna Johnson,* she was standing in the front yard of Ed Thorpe's talking with a tall middle-aged woman who, we later learned, was Rosa Sallins,** her niece and Liza Basden's daughter.

The two women walked over to the car and greeted us.
759 We inquired about the various methods the midwife employed
755 and she said, "Tuh cut a pain yuh use a shahp instrument, lak a knife, aw a peah of sizzuhs. Yuh put it unduh duh pilluh on duh bed. Duh pusson who is sick musn see yuh do it aw it wohn wuk. Sometime yuh use a smoothin ion. Dat cut duh pain too." [12b]

775 Rosa, who had been rather impatiently waiting an op-
845 portunity to speak, now offered, "Lots ub duh chillun bawn wid a caul. Ef dey is bawn wid a caul, dey kin see spirits." [4]

• 787 The midwife looked solemn. "Folks hab tuh be mighty keahful wen duh chile is bawn lak dat. Ef dey dohn do sumpm bout it, duh chile will be hanted all its life. It'll alluz be fraid uh ghos." [59]

* *Anna Johnson, Harris Neck.*
** *Rosa Sallins, Harris Neck.*

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

"What can be done so that the child won't be haunted?" we asked.

"Dey dry duh caul an make a tea out ub it an hab duh chile drink it.[8] Den all duh ebil will disappeah. Duh chile will see ghos, but dey will nebuh hahm um an he wohn be afraid ub um."

Rosa exposed her large white teeth in a broad smile. "I wuz bawn wid teet. Had two front teet wen I wuz bawn."[8a]

Neither Rosa nor the midwife knew the significance of this unusual occurrence, though both women thought it was probably a good luck sign.

Anna was reminded of some old remedies that she had found beneficial to teething babies. "Yuh take a alligatuh tusk an clean it an shine it an hang it roun duh neck uh duh chile," she explained. "Den yuh kin take duh foot ub a groun mole. I fuhgits wich one it is. Wich is it, Rosa?"

"Dohn mattuh wich one it is jis so long its duh foefoot."

"Yuh dry it, put it in a sack made out ub a new piece uh clawt an hang it roun duh baby's neck.[8, 12] Sho heps wid duh teethin. I knows plenty bout cuos lak dat," she concluded. "I ain lak deze root folks, dough, das alluz fixin people."

Rosa agreed with her aunt. "Sho is plenty rootin yuh. It goin on all duh time. Deah's plenty uh root people wut is alluz wukin gense folks."[15]

"Dey git a grudge gense yuh an put down sumpm fuh yuh," supplemented Anna, "an pretty soon yuh dohn know yuh ownsef."

"Sometime dey put it in yuh food," this from Rosa again. "Ef yuh got a enemy, yuh dohn dare eat wut yuh lak. Nebuh know wen deah's sumpm in duh food, an ef deah is, yuh sho wohn las. Cose ef yuh weahs a han, it'll wahn yuh an keep duh cunjuh frum wukkin.[12a, c, d] Lots uh folks carries some kine uh chahm all duh time."[8]

"Some uh our folks yuh keep frizzle chicken. Dey dig up

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

754 wuz alluz fixin cunjuh.[16] She tie up ebryting in sacks. She git a lill foot track dus,[7] a lill haiah combins, an nail parin,[10] an she tie um up wid a lill rag. Cose, I dohn belieb in dis an wen she die, I bun um. Ef yuh hab any trouble wid snakes,[50] (825) yuh ketch um an bun um wid duh trash. Den all duh whole (789) kingdom uh snakes will leab yuh lone."[50]

We next questioned Aunty Jane about signs.

• 787 "Yes'm, I knows plenty uh signs but my head so full uh-rum I dohn know wich tuh tell yuh. Some ub um I beliebs 484 an some ub um I ain belieb. Wen yuh go on a journey an 789 yuh hattuh tun back, yuh make a cross mahk on duh dut an 791 spit on it, an it sho bad luck tuh bring a hoe in duh house."

The subject of drums was then brought up.

533 "I ain heah um beat duh drums in my chuch," Aunty Jane 534 said. "But I sho is heah plenty uh drum beat. We use tuh alluz dance tuh duh drums. We dance roun in a succle an (535) we hab drum an we hab goad rattle an we beat tin pan tuh-gedduh.[23] Some time dey hab sto-bought drum, but Alex Harris, he muh son, he make um. He lib up duh ribbuh."

534 Aunty Jane gave us a description of how the drums were made.

(281) "Yuh kill a coon an yuh skin um an yuh tack duh skin up side duh house tuh dry an yuh stretch um good till um tight (237) an smood. Den yuh stretch um obuh duh en ub a holluh tree trunk.[25] Sometime dey is big drum wut stan as high as dis." She raised her hand about three feet from the ground.

534 We asked Aunty Jane what trees they used. Did they use 824 oak?

"No, ma'am, it ain good tuh use oak ef yuh kin hep it. It too hahd. Yuh take a good cypress aw ceduh wut eat out on duh inside an yuh take um an scoop um out an stretch duh skin obuh duh ens. Sometime yuh kin fine a holly wut'll 535 do. Alex, he make drum up tuh two yeah ago an we sho hab 533 big time doin duh dances wile dey beat duh drums. Wene-(533) buh we happy aw wannuh celebrate, we dance." At this

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825 yuh all duh time an wistle jis lak a pusson. I dohn fool wid
(MM) no spiduh. Dey is bad luck. All duh time dey drop down
right out ub a tree.

775 "I know deah is spirits an ghos cuz I kin see um.[3] Yuh
• 781 hab tuh be bawn wid a caul tuh be able tuh see duh spirits.[4]
845 "Some uh duh folks is rid so much by witches dat attuh a
754 time dey git tin an po an jis die.[5] Wen a witch come in duh
789 house, it hang up duh skin behine duh doe an ef yuh put
salt on duh skin, duh witch caahn put it on agen. Benne
seed is bad fuh duh witch too an keep um way.

754 "Witches take all kine uh shape. Sometime dey lak ani-
(825) mal, sometime lak bud.[6] In Harris Neck deah wuz a big
buzzud wut use tuh light on duh fence ebry time dey would
be milkin duh cows. Wen duh buzzud would fly off, one uh
duh milk buckets would alluz be dry.[6a] Dis happen ebry
day. Dey would shoot at duh bud but nobody could ebuh
hit it. One man he take a dime an he quawtuh it; den he put
it in duh gun. Duh nex day wen duh buzzud light, he shoot
at it an he hit it in duh wing. It fly off an go down a chim-
bley ub a house. Wen duh men go in duh house, dey fine
a ole uhmun wid uh ahm broke. Dey know den she wuz a
witch. I know deah wuz some talk bout bunnin uh up, but
I dohn tink dey do it.

775 "Ebry night I sit on dis poach heah." He pointed to the
776 back porch of the white house. "I kin see duh spirits goin
787 by. Deah is a whole crowd uh lill wite tings. Dey is goin
obuh deah tuh duh spring. Some is lak chillun; some is lak
grown folks. Dey jis go cross duh fiel tuh duh mahble steps
uh duh ole gahden an down duh steps tuh duh fountn. I ain
nebuh bodduh um an dey ain nebuh do me no hahm."

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

764 "Yes'm, we hab set-ups wid duh dead, but I ain know bout killin chicken. At duh fewnul, dey kills hawg an hab[40] plenty tuh eat.[37b, c] Duh reason fuh dis is so dat sperrit hab [775] plenty at duh las. Wen fewnul pruhcession gits tuh grabe-764 yahd, dey stops. I ain know wy dey do it but dey stops at 782 duh gate, and dey ax leab tuh come in. Deah ain nobody at duh gate, but dey alluz ax jis duh same. Dey say, 'Fambly, we come tuh put our brudduh away in mudduh duts. Please leh us go tru gate.' "[60]

754 About conjure, however, the old woman was not very communicative. "I ain know bout cunjuh," she said. "I heahs bout spells on people, but I ain see um. Now shadduhs, I see 776 um. One night comin down duh road, I git tuh place weah 787 road tun, an I heah sumpm behine me runnin long close tuh groun. He got big long tus, dis long, an he tongue hangin out. He pas close tuh me, an he look a me. I see um good. He got long tick haiah lak Noofoulan. Deah ain nebuh bin dog lak um on ilun. He mus be shadduh.[54]

"Den one night, I come frum chuch wid huzbun. We gits tuh tun, I heahs sumpm agen. I looks, an deah is sumpm look lak man. Huzbun he ain see um. Den I heahs a stompin, an sumpm come by so close tuh me I kin mos tech um, an he tun tuh spotted ox. 'Budge,' I calls um wen dey changes lak dat. Dat spotted ox go gallopin off, an I say tuh huzbun, 'Yuh ain see um?' He say, 'Wut?' I say, 'Da spotted ox wut go pas down duh road an out in da fiel?' He say, 'I ain see nuttn.' Das wen I luns dat wen yuh see um, yuh musn talk bout um.

539 "No'm, I dunno no animal stories. I heah um, but I fuh-gits. I know bout lizzud an rabbit, dough. Yuh ain know bout lizzud an rabbit? Well, lizzud, he wuk hahd. He hab sode wut he cut crop wid, an it wuk by itsef an it cut so fine, nuttn lef.[39] Lizzud he speak wuds tuh it—it do all duh wuk. Now, rabbit, he smaht. He ain got no sode lak lizzud got an he wahn one. He hide behine bush, an he watch da sode

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

He wuz the waw chief son and doze mahks tell whut tribe he belong tuh. Wen I knowd im, he stay down in a lill house on the alley neah the ribbuh. I sho heahd im talk a lot. Ise hole duh hide fuh im wen he scrapes em with a scrapuh. Patty say all the people suppote the king by plantin cassaba an givin the king some uh the cassaba."

We asked Uncle Henry about the dances and the customs of long ago.

"I sho see dances wut give thanks fuh the crop [16] an we prays in the night an dance wen the sun rise. I know the Buzzud Lope too.[17] I seen em do that an they use tuh have big Satdy night doins. Roun Christmas we git three days' holiday an theah's plenty uh dances an shoutin then. We goes tuh the ownuh an gits a ticket an we all gathuhs at the same place an we shouts an kick up with each othuh, but wen yuh ticket out, ef yuh dohn come back, the patrol will git yuh an then yuh gits whipped."

We asked him about witch doctors and taboos.

"I tell yuh, missus, they ain many wut knows bout roots yuh tuhday. Some does come tuh sell hans an chahms [8] an they's a heap uh signs fuh the bad an good luck ef I have time tuh study bout em. Now the Jordan family, ole man Jordan, he dohn let none uh his family eat rabbit. Theah's the ole man an Ahnt Tillah an theah chillun, Sally an Austin. He use tuh tell the boy, 'Dohn yuh go shoot no rabbits roun yuh; we dohn none of us eats rabbit. Thas bad luck fuh us.' He sho wuz strick bout it." [65]

We questioned the old man further about his recollections of the beliefs and practices of his ancestors. It appeared, however, that for the present, his discourse had come to a close.

After a moment's hesitation he answered us with, "I ain think bout doze ole days so much lately, miss, but wen uh gits tuh studyin bout em, lots uh things comes back tuh me."

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Islanders have delineated this three-part concept very precisely. It was described to me by a very religious Sea Island man as follows:

> Listen to me good now: when you die in this world, you see, the . . . the . . . the . . . soul of a man go home to the Kingdom of God, but your spirit still's here on earth. . . .And if you was . . . the devil in all your days . . . your spirit, after you dead, your spirit can do the same thing. Your soul up there, but your spirit de right down de here with the body. . . . And that's the one gone . . . gone do the effect to you. You see now . . . now that's, that's why I say this now. A lot of people don't believe. Say, say . . . say is not ghost. Is ghost there.

The "dream spirit," this man continued, must be permitted periodically to take leave of the body and roam. It therefore leaves the body and wanders all over the world when one goes to sleep. The body is unprotected while the spirit is away, however, and if the spirit should come in contact with a second, evil spirit while it is roaming, it must race back to the body. When this happens, the person may cry out in sleep and become frightened; if the spirit does not come back to the body, the person dies in sleep.[49]

Another distinctive element in the islanders' world view is their belief in voodoo, or hoodoo. This belief involves rituals whereby spirits, good or evil, are conjured up to offer predictions, kill enemies, or perform cures for problems ranging from broken hearts, infertility, and rheumatism to mental illness and cancer. The spirit of one's ancestors is considered the closest link to the spirits of the "other" world. Thus, on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa, spirits are asked to intervene on behalf of a living relative. The belief in voodoo is still so strong in the Sea Island area that Dr. Buzzard, a known practitioner of the occult, maintained a high standard of living from reading signs, effecting certain cures, and appealing to the spirits.

The islanders set great store on preparation for burial and consider it an abomination to die without having made the necessary financial arrangements to be buried at home. Thus some islanders pay on burial policies all of their lives. By tradition a parent starts a burial policy for each child that is born, paying twenty-five to fifty cents per month until the policy is paid in full. It may take one's whole life to pay for all the policies. When the children reach a certain age, the parents usually ask

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

115 God, roots, and life. He was respected in the community and renowned for his knowledge of the Bible and root medicine. He owned a fair amount of land, which he put to good use growing corn, cucumbers, peas, okra, tomatoes, and other vegetables. The only time I ever got to talk with him was late evenings (when the sun "de red for down"), when he would come in from plowing and planting and sit under his big pecan tree to "catch some breeze." On a few occasions his wife, Miss Maime, a small, short-legged, soft-spoken woman, brought his plate out to the pecan tree so that he could eat while he talked to me. His plate had always been set aside and kept warm, and it [262] was indeed tempting, piled high with cowpeas and bone, a good help- [263] ing of corn bread sliced and filled with fresh butter and molasses, [272] onions and tomatoes from the garden, and hot pepper sauce, with penny drink or iced tea served in his own particular glass.

Mr. Hampy was not a lonely man. He had several children and more head of grandchildren than he felt he could keep up with. Mr. Hampy's children who had remained at home had built their houses or set up their trailers so that each shared the communal yard area near his home, as is traditional in Sea Island family communities. Some of his children, including a special daughter, had moved to New York. The [845] daughter was special because she had been born with a caul over her face and was thus thought to have the gift not only to see ghosts, hants, [789] or hags but to be able to know things that other people are not privileged to know. Mr. Hampy himself had been born with a caul, and he 115 was thus able to sympathize with her special sight. In fact, he at- 845 tributed her leaving the island and going to New York in part to her 789 desire for an area where such things as ghosts, hags, and plat-eyes 775 were less prevalent. Because the island roads are densely forested, they are judged natural haunts for the spirits of the dead. Mr. Hampy often amused himself by telling me that if I really wanted to see a ghost, he 115 could show me one any day of the week just after midnight on the road 775 leading to the Presbyterian graveyard. However, we never made that journey after nightfall to see the ghost standing at the entrance to the lane (see Appendix 3).[A]

115 Mr. Hampy told no tales of Ber Rabbit and his witty ways, though 959 he admitted that he knew many of them. His only topics were religious [538] or medicinal. It was from him that I learned many of the Sea Island folk cures. He accompanied me to the wooded area behind his home and pointed out some of the common roots that grow on top of the

A. [For Appendix 3, see Category 775, pp. 158-164--Analyst]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very distraught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she had the following dialogue:

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
> "Yes Sir."
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

"help" who held Praise House membership, conducted religious services, and oversaw local religious activity was actually more significant than the black elder who might oversee several plantations. Like the elders, spiritual leaders were loved, respected, and faithful in those things pertaining to the welfare of the religious community. The spiritual leaders' influence belonged to a tradition older than the black elders' role.[17] They undoubtedly adjusted to Christianity by making a place for themselves in the heart of it as practiced by Gullahs. Also Baptist elders, though having the interests of the community at heart, may have imbibed too much of the new religion and been too willing to preach and teach conservatism. Thus for the Gullahs, the power of and respect for plantation spiritual parents exceeded that of Baptist-sanctioned elders. The former were healers, interpreters of dreams, signs, and visions, all of which were central to Gullah conceptions of religion and infused with their impressionistic form of Christianity.[18] The functions of the two types of religious leaders may have overlapped to some degree and also complemented each other. They represent different aspects of the Gullahs' spiritual existence—one Christian, the other African—and an element of syncretism within slave religion.

Examination of Gullah methods of admission to church membership is one key to understanding the significance of the spiritual leader's role, Gullah socioreligious spiritualism, and links with a West African past. A candidate's acceptance into the church and subsequently into the Praise House depended upon relating a satisfactory experience, which was the result of a soul-grappling, traumatic confrontation between the individual and a higher power, culminating, if successful, in a sensation of rebirth and full membership in the religious community. The period of transition between the time a desire to become a Christian was expressed and the acceptance by elders of the religious experience was called "seekin'."

The name, "seekin'" was introduced to the Gullahs by Methodist missionaries. At meetings with slaves, after preaching and teaching, the Methodists would then inquire if anyone would like to come forward and "seek Jesus." Those who professed such a desire would then go "on trial" and remain in this limbo status until the missionary deemed them ready for baptism. Probationers, or "seekers of religion," were required by Methodists to know the Creed, Sacraments, and Lord's Prayer, and they were "not eligible for baptism until they had learned them under-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves
795 attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of
797 religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term
561 and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary
175 provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of
● 787 the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'"
561 process:

> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel*." This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river. When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

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normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of burials), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote:

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back." . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

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It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation:

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body--all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[22]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quasi-human nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism. Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena:

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . .—near the water stood a large

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization through church membership, the experience itself was a private one and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ, prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist-oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came. "I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion' perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter-of communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten."

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed until they became Praise House members. Once membership was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

African initiation, beginning with a symbolic death, a journey to the spirit world, and complete rupture with one's past life and personality, was a time of lethargy, isolation, and prostration. As a result of contact with the spirits (nameless objects or ancestors) while in the bush, the novice's personality was modified in the image of a deity, and the individual was said to have become godlike through association—hence the Mano term "little spirits of the bush." Spirit possession took place during bush-life, itself represented as a period of unconsciousness when the initiate departed the domain of reason. The neophyte emerged from the experience "reborn," with a secondary spiritual personality inculcated as a type of conditioned reflex. When cultural and environmental forces interacted with these individual personalities from similar traditions, a psychological, collective process that was rarely conscious could be stimulated. The baptism or "sacred bath" purged the initiate's mind of previous attitudes, and future behavior would be an emulation of the true spirit within, or "little me."[4] Hence possession behavior can be interpreted as part of a society's efforts to incorporate into a coherent system the natural and supernatural worlds. Since possession was a public ceremony, where one demonstrated his or her individual spiritual presence in a sharing experiental manner, the phenomenon can be seen as solidifying human collectivity and providing a further basis for the participants to create a socioreligious network of communication and interaction. In the following description of a shout recorded more than fifty years after slavery, it illustrates possession in full force among Sea Island blacks, and suggests how certain African religious cult themes could have been retained. This shout, in a St. Helena Island Praise House, involved "welcoming and initiating" three teenage boys baptized into the church that morning. The Praise House leader announced that, "After givin' de right han' of fellowship to dese t'ree boys," the benediction would take place, after which "we'll gib dese boys de opportunity to exercise deyselbes wid de shout." The new converts were allowed to begin and demonstrate their ability to "exercise deyselbes." As people pushed back the benches, there was laughter and conversation as the shout began. The three youths stamped the floor, clapped their hands rhythmically, and moved around and around the open space in the center of the floor, "which was walled in by encouraging older people and other young people, all singing "De bell dun rung." The people commented on the shouters, such expressions as "Yoner look at Johnny, he exercise fur tru enty?"

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

or "Com' on, let's git indey widdem." The others joined in, now paying little attention to the new members. The three initiates, while no longer leading the shout, were "determined boys in their teens," and seemed bent on holding the center of attention. They clapped and stamped louder, and again assumed leadership of the group of shouters:

> Clear, distinct, and strong their treble voices took up the shout song. Above all the voices in the room theirs could be heard singing "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung." Catching the contagious enthusiasm of these youthful voices, the others in the ring and those around the wall sang louder and louder. Yet above the rhythmic thud of the heels of the shouters as they jerked themselves around the circle in perfect two-four time, above the deafening din of the hand clapping, above the boisterous laughter and giggling of those who had stepped outside to "cool off" and were pressing one another against the quivering window sill of the open windows was heard the initiates with a note of frenzy in their shrill clear voices as they screamed the shout song, "De bell dun rung, de bell dun rung, de bell dun rung," which many of their associates in the circle were incoherently muttering with apparently little effort toward articulation. Just as a whirling dynamo generates a magnetic field, so this vibrant circle varying in diameter according to the endurance of the participants turning on, and on, seemed to create a desire which could not be satisfied until each one yielded to the irrestible urge to "git in dey widdem."[44]

The shout as a form of expression may have been a way of reconciling contradictory tendencies among individuals. Certainly not all of the participants were identically inspired, but probably had a number of different, authentic, subjective motivations and sought an outlet in a similar type of collective behavior. Hence, on the conscious level, the West African tradition notwithstanding, engaging in a ring shout had a variety of appeals for the Gullahs as slaves. It was a form of entertainment, a substitute for the social activity they were forced to relinquish, an individual release for pent-up frustrations and hostilities, a dimension of their religious spirit which linked them to natural and supernatural forces, and a mode of liaison among themselves. The following antebellum account of a Christmas shout on one of the Barnwell Sea Island plantations provides insight into the multifaceted meaning of this ceremony for the Gullahs:

> The Negroes never went to sleep on the night before Xmas. They held prayers all night in the largest house at the settlement. This was Daddy January's house. Jack (foreman) could read and also August Baker our houseservant. Our mother had given both of them Testaments and Prayerbooks. I can still recall very dis-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

implies that earthly death is the setting of the sun, or the third moment. Death was not the end of life, nor the cemetery a final resting place, but a door *(mwelo)* between two worlds. The fourth moment is midnight on earth when the sun is shining on the world of the dead. Here rebirth takes place. In any case, no matter what the unconscious motivation, what many considered to be a weakness among these bondspeople was actually a source of strength. They overcame a fear of death in light of the reality of its dominant presence among them, and through their realization that they, more so than most people, were often powerless to alter its course. Thus, while Gullahs did not shirk from death, they were sensitive to the degree to which their lives were exploited, and aware that oppression often caused an untimely end to life. The depth of their understanding of their position was sometimes grippingly demonstrated. Teacher William Allen was struck by how much the children sang of pain and death. Little "Margaret" came to the well to draw her pail of water. Putting it on her head, she walked off singing "shall I die—shall I die." She was followed by Tom and Abraham "galloping along on bamboo horses and shouting, 'my body rock 'long feber.' " Charlotte Forten was much affected by one of the hymns which she heard Gullah children singing:

> I wonder where my mudder gone;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!
> Grass grow in de graveyard;
> Sing, O graveyard!
> Graveyard ought to know me;
> Ring, Jerusalem!

It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—"Sing, O Graveyard."[1]

The pathos is there certainly, but the sense of hope, so characteristic of the Gullahs, is also present in the words "Grass grow in de graveyard." This could indicate that, in the BaKongo tradition, although there was death, there was also life and rebirth. The refrain "Graveyard ought to know me" might refer to the slaves' previous journey to the world of the dead as "seekers." The phrase could also recognize the omnipresence of death among the slaves.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

763

no sorcery involved, by praying out loud, reporting a heavenly vision or giving some evidence that peace had been made with God on the deathbed. A pious life counted for little if this was not observed. Nor did an evil life mean damnation, if the dying could satisfy spectators with an appropriate heavenly vision. What was probably more important to Gullahs was that the deceased be at peace with the world, hence assuring the community that he or she was not a witch, or bewitched, and would not return to "haant" the living.[10]

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Those spirits destined for hell did not actually go there until judgment day, according to Gullahs. Instead, these "on-easy speerits" roamed the earth, having no resting place, and tormented the living. Some Gullahs believed that good spirits went straight to heaven, but most seemed to think that even these spirits remained on earth, close to the place of their burial. Unlike those who "died bad," good spirits would normally not harm the living, nor would they roam. They appeared only in dreams, giving messages and warnings to the living. Thus Gullahs had a real concern for coaxing an individual to "die good," and a real superstition about those who "died bad." The slaves devised various mechanisms of defense against the latter spirits.[11]

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Much of the Gullahs' attitude toward death and belief in spirits was inherited from the African respect for and honor of the living dead, and from the African belief in the power of sorcery. Consider, for instance, a description of death among the Mende:

> When a dying man is panting for breath, the Mende say "Taa ha ha yiyei le ma" ("he is climbing the hill of death"). As soon as death is announced, the members of the family all begin to wail. The body of the deceased is then washed, and messages are sent to call the absent members of the family. . . . Members of the family will bring money, cloth, wine and rice as their contribution towards the funeral expenses. . . . On the fourth day for a man (the third day for a woman), the "crossing-the-river" ceremony takes place. . . . If these ceremonies are not properly performed, the evil will fall on those responsible.

Similarly, for Temne people, the underlying idea of funeral rites is to appease the spirit of the dead so they will not trouble the living. Mende also believe that separation of good and bad people takes place after their crossing the river. While there is no clear-cut idea as to who bad people are, they are chiefly thought of as those who dealt in "bad medicine or witchcraft." These evil ones in their spirit form will vent their feelings by sending disease and will manifest themselves by haunting the living

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

APPENDIX E

Gullah Folkways

177 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept
178 outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through subtlety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gullah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA
127 workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and
128 supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless
178 otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

Folk Beliefs

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[856] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When
[828] babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This
[789] will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have
791 strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.*
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[p. 344]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Spirits lift their feet high off the ground when they walk. If they come around your bed when you are sick and stay for some time, it means you are going to get well. The spirits belong to your dead relatives, who have come back to earth to see how you are. If they come and then go away again, it means that they have come for you and you are going to die.

Spirits come back to the earth sometimes in the shape of animals. They do this because they are evil spirits and want to worry humans. It is easy to tell whether a dog or cat that crosses your path is a natural animal or spirit. If it is a natural animal you won't feel anything, but if it is a spirit, the hair will stand up on your head and the goose bumps will rise on your skin.[b,e]

To prevent a dead person's spirit from returning to "Hant you," sprinkle turpentine on the floor behind the body as it is taken out of the house. The turpentine carries the spirit with it.

To keep "hants" (evil spirits) off when there is a death, burn sulphur at the four corners of the house.

If a person who has voodooed another looks in the face of the corpse when he is in his coffin, blood will gush from the mouth of the corpse and everyone present will know who "fixed" him and caused his death.

There are certain persons among the Gullah Negroes who are known as "conjurers," these are very dangerous people and not to be trifled with. A conjurer can "put bad mout" on people or things, give them bad luck and keep them from prospering. A "spell" cast by a conjurer can cause a person to become ill and slowly waste away until he dies.

A conjurer is a very secret thing. Negroes will not discuss it with a white person. It is black magic and to treat it lightly is to invite disaster. They will admit quite readily however, if they have had a particularly bad run of luck, that somebody has "put bad mount" on them.[c]

Negroes of the South Carolina Sea Islands seldom employ the word "witch" in describing an old woman who is versed in the art of witchcraft. Accurately speaking there are no witches among the Negroes—at

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478; Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

21. Mikell, *Christ Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Christ Wheels*; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Deewain People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* 1 (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

41 Caravan & Caravan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

EACH LEAF ON THIS TREE WILL HEAL A NATION

159 782 (164)

I sick one time, in 1894. I sick 'til my mother and father give me up. Typhoid fever, gracious God! Oh that's a good God. I can prove it!

I was to go into the hospital the next day. There was a door, just like I looking on it now. I see a white man come through and walk just past my bed. He come and just look at me. Didn't say nothing, then go out. 1894.

And when the day was clean, the white gentleman come through the door again; I didn't know how he come in the house, but there he was. And he had on a blue gown, and hair drop on he shoulder. Yes sir! And he come to my bed, ask me, "What will you have me to do?"

And you know what I tell him? I say, "Please sir, could you read the fifteenth chapter and the psalm, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd'?"

He say, "Have you a prayer book?" Ask me just like I asking you a question!

I say, "Yes, sir."

He read the fifteenth chapter, the first six verse. Then after he done read that, he turn to the Twenty-Third Psalm, and he read it for me.

And he take me and he carry me down to a river. My spirit go on down to the river. Jesus! And when I get there, he said, "This tree bears twelve manna fruit. Every leaf on this tree will heal a nation." Gracious God have mercy!

Well sir, I wake up. I ain't seen when the man gone, but I know he come and carry me to that tree, down to that river side, and he tell me, "Each leaf on this tree will heal a nation."

159 781

Never sick so again yet! And that's the truth. Gracious God have mercy! Don't tell me don't serve God, because I going serve God until he say "well done." Yes ma'am, "well done."

12 elements of their cultural heritage? On a broader level,
178 Africanisms have been clearly cited in the music and dancing patterns of mainland Blacks. Likewise the gospel music of the Sea Islands is viewed as highly permeated with African cultural entities. In the same vein, the African features of Sea Island religious beliefs and ceremonies are well established. The African features in the dancing patterns of Sea Islanders has been noted also.

12 The survival of African Cultural traits in the family
178 structuring and in the child rearing habits and beliefs of
855 Sea Islanders has not been carefully researched. Data of this sort is disjointed, and comes primarily as an indirect contribution of the numerous collection of Sea Island folklores. This literature does note some child rearing features which are common to Sea Islanders and to Blacks elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere who are of West African heritage. The following are examples of these commonly held beliefs:

(845) (789) A child born with a face caul is able to see supernatural forces and is able to see visions of ancestors.

(789) (751) Charms, necklaces, bracelelets have the power to protect against supernatural affliction and to ward off disease.

(754) The hair and nails of people can be used in "conja" to bring harm. Consequently the parent warns the child not to have strangers comb hair or to cut nails. Parent may also instruct child to destroy residue hair and nails.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 545 If the black tenants on a plantation surprise its owner with the finish of their performance, he may feel inclined to organize a society, put the entertainments they give on a more permanent basis, and hold singing contests between members of different churches, denominations, communities, plantations, or counties, as was done in our section.

Years ago I found it expedient to form the Spiritual Singers Society of Coastal Georgia, and in 1934 to organize another society, called The Plantation Singers, which specializes in secular songs. This was done to help restore the prestige which the slave songs once enjoyed. Friends generously gave trophies for each type of folksong, and both societies have accomplished precisely what it was hoped they would. Only vouched-for singers of the old songs are eligible for membership, and their names are enrolled in a record book. Buttons, with the name of the society around the rim, have been given out to well-nigh a thousand singers along the Coastal Highway, from the Ogeechee River to the Florida line. These buttons proclaim to the world that the men, women, and children who wear them are proud to sing the old songs. There is nothing like the weight of numbers to add importance to any movement! Big "Star Singer" buttons distinguish the leaders, and provide the incentive needed to overcome shyness, and to bring them into the limelight. [434] Incidentally, in the division of the proceeds—every penny of which goes to the Negroes—the leaders are given twenty-five or fifty cents more than the basers.

533 545 177 The particular value of our "sings" lies in the likelihood of impressing a large number of Negroes with the high regard in which their music is held by white people of importance. In 1934, the annual festival at the Sea Island Casino brought out an audience of over three hundred. It is readily seen that one hundred and twenty-five singers, from Negro communities a hundred miles apart, can act as missionaries in carrying word to their neighbors of how the white folks behave when they want a song repeated, of how they sometimes yell: "Bravo! Bravo!"—whatever that means—and that they pay real money to hear Negroes sing.

533 545 [434] [987] Except on one occasion, it has always been possible to send the singers home with a dollar in the hand and their transportation paid. At the festival, held during the dark days of the bank moratorium of March, 1933, the singers were thankful to get fifty cents, food, and all expenses. That was a memorable night. A tall Negro from Broadfield—making the "Sign of the Judgment" with uplifted arm—led the sixty swaying singers in the shout: "Can't Hide." They began to move quietly, as

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

in a trance, and it was soon evident, from a peculiar heart-clutching quality in the rhythm, that they were "possessed" by it. Song followed song, and the spell was not broken. Some in the audience wept, others applauded, but the Negroes appeared unaware of their surroundings. Several middle-aged Southerners said it was the first time they had seen the Negroes "get happy." Although the performance was strictly decorous, I was frankly relieved when the participants came to earth, after a third call for:

My God is a rock in a weary lan'
A weary lan', 'n a weary lan'
A weary lan', I know He's a rock 'n a weary lan'
Shelter in a time of storm.[22]

What the future holds for this music—the only distinctive form, besides that of the Indian, that has been developed in America—remains to be seen. If plantation owners will lend a hand and provide the rural singers with appreciative audiences, the chances are that it will survive and enable the younger generation of composers—to whom I notice it has a particular appeal—to utilize it as a stepping stone for further development. Melody and harmony, instead of being stressed as they now are in Negro colleges, will fall into line with rhythm and architectural form which formerly characterized the music of the slave. The result may perhaps be a new type of music—of which there is serious need. The classic system, through being confined to the development of one musical form to the exclusion of all others, is clearly in need of rejuvenation. Such was the case with the plastic arts in the first two years of the twentieth century, when the primitive sculpture of the African Negro provided the necessary stimulation. It is freely admitted that there is a cloud over the music world today; and writers of music, in their struggle to create something original, are moving from the library to the laboratory in search of new notes, new scales, new tonalities, new harmonies. I would suggest going farther afield, and trying out what Africa has to offer. It is a curious fact, however, that musicians are not adventurous, and few wander far from the beaten track. According to W. E. Ward, who has lived for years in Africa and has made a particular study of its music, that of the West Coast has many more tricks than the one or two obvious ones which have been utilized by Tin Pan Alley. Present-day composers might advantageously follow the lead he indicates.

[22] *An indication of the chastened spirit of the audience.*

91 Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

Another custom, more widespread than is generally known, probably originated in Africa. When a new building is completed it is christened with prayer and song, followed by shouting. The afternoon Joe and Clarence finished the Cabin, (Illustration 12)[A] Clarence made a prayer and asked a blessing, Julia put rice in the four corners for good luck, and after a few songs it was considered that the building was auspiciously launched.

The addition to the original Cabin was not blessed. It is a curious fact that the roof developed leaks at once, termites got into the floor, and it was necessary to rebuild the whole section. If such bad luck continues, it will look as though the Sapelo idea is not far wrong. There, it is considered most unwise to put on an addition to an old house. "You will lose some member of your family if you do."

In the papering of the Cabin, on my own initiative, I took another precaution which has afforded the singers much amusement. The walls of many small cabins are covered with news-print, because the prevailing idea in the old days was that a hag had to read every word before she could work evil on you.[20] I used the financial section of *The New York Times* for good measure. In the accompanying illustration (Illustration 14)[B] it can be seen how this original type of wallpaper enhances the picture made by the singers, and separates them from their background. It was made during the closing song—"One a These Days, My Sister"—when Willis was shaking the hand of Bessie in accordance with the usual custom at prayer meeting in a less sophisticated era.

DeZayas, in *African Negro Art*, tells of an exceedingly sensitive devil at Sierra Leone, who requires the utmost respect, and, if not propitiated by liberal offerings of palm wine, rice, and fowl, will certainly bring trouble to those invoking his intervention. Every time he is consulted, rice flour must first be offered. However, our Negroes disclaim any knowledge of their reason for using rice at a housewarming, except to bring good luck.

Chance often enables us to discover new examples of the general belief in occult forces. Such was the case when a friend and I heard a cracking report in my empty kitchen. On investigation we found that a glass bowl had broken in half. The next day Julia told me it is a sure sign that some member of your family is going

[20] A similar notion is held in Nassau according to M. Cavel in "Items of Folk-Lore from Bahama Negroes," in Vol. 17 of the Journal of American Folk-Lore. "If you think you are being hagged, take a pint of benne seed . . . and guinea corn . . . spill it all in the four corners of your house; that will catch the hag as she cannot leave the house before she has picked up all the seeds, one by one, during the night."

A, [For Illustration 12, see Category 342, plate facing p. 80--Analyst]
B, [For Illustration 14, see Category 353, plate facing p. 96--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

787 763 to die. But in this instance it was her family, not mine. She had eleven children—now there are only ten. Julia told me later that within a few days of her son's death two lamp chimneys in her house had broken without being touched, and a saucer had broken in half in her hand, one half falling to the floor.

754 When a letter from Dauphin Plantation, Haiti, reported gloom in the laundry, all because three little stones had been left on the window sill of the cabin of Diana, the black washerwoman, I made inquiries and found that those innocent-appearing pebbles meant something quite as ominous to our Negroes as to Diana. When I asked a couple of colored women if they would mind if such stones had been left on a window ledge of theirs, they made it distinctly clear that they would. To get the better of such an ugly situation, one told me, she would take a piece of tin or shingle, push the stones onto it with a stick, and throw them far away. The other particularized and said you mustn't face the stones, you must approach from the side and shove them from that angle—and it was much safer to throw them into the fire.

789 I first learned about the dime worn on a string around the ankle—to ward off bad luck—at a little Negro church. The preacher was railing at his congregation for believing in charms: "Right now, I know a lot of you have dimes strung 'round your ankles." Since then I have been on the lookout. Sure enough, they are there. According to Mungo Park, similarly worn charms, or amulets, are common in all parts (170) of Africa.

567 754 197 Kingsley says in his Treatise that he purchased Gullah Jack—who was a conjurer in his own country—a prisoner of war, at Zinguebar. "He had his conjuring implements with him in a bag which he brought on board the ship, and always retained them." For the benefit of those who are interested in knowing where "Gullah Jack" was born and to eliminate the idea that he belonged to the Gola tribe living in Liberia, east of the City of Monrovia, I wish to quote Kingsley's statement that Gullah Jack's "own country" was M'Choolay Moreema, where a dialect of the Angola tongue is spoken clear across Africa from sea to sea, a distance perhaps of three thousand miles. These words should establish the origin of the Gullah dialect, but if you have always believed that "Gullah" derives from the Golas of Liberia—Liberia it will undoubtedly continue to be.

567 754 (551) Mrs. A. S. Hilsman, who was born on a plantation at Fancy Bluff, tells me there was a witch or goof doctor among her father's Negroes, who had learned his magic in Africa. After "freedom" he took the surname of Polecat, as he wanted one

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

"How are you, brother?" The reply is: "So-so, Cranman. How are you, brother?" The writer explains that "It does not do to claim that one is feeling too well, otherwise the enmity of the spirits might be incurred." From this it can be seen why there was a wide divergence between Lowman's words and his performance, and also why our older Negroes always appear to enjoy poor health.

Another tradition caused me to be embarrassed for the poor preacher, who seemed to have a strange affliction. I furtively looked around to see how the younger members of the congregation were taking the curious performance. Their matter-of-course attitude should have made me less innocent. However, it was not until I heard other preachers give the same effect—the mewing of a harassed cat combined with the bark of a half-strangled dog—that I realized my ludicrous mistake. At the peak of the preacher's harangue the words pour out so fast that he has no time to get his breath, and his gasping efforts cause the outrageous sounds that appear to have no name with us, but which are described by Martha Beckwith, in *Black Roadways*, under the name of "trooping." [23] She believes that the exercise "if persisted in, will produce that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communication of spirits." But it has always seemed to me that religious ecstasy is itself the source of the strange manifestation. When the preacher has reached his rhythmical best; when an insistent tapping of toes on the floor provides an under-current of sound along with a feeling of uncanny suspense; when the "moaning" (as the peculiarly beautiful humming of the Negroes is called) takes on an elemental quality that comes from everywhere and from nowhere in particular—then the snapping point is reached for someone, and you hear a piercing shriek. A woman stands up with stark, stiff arms stretched high above her head. If she makes much of a commotion she is supported into the open air to recover. When I was a little child I saw a woman who had gone into this rigid state carried to a pump beside the church, where, under the spout, she was quickly brought to her senses. In the House of Prayer in Savannah (where the pillars are thickly padded, and the sawdust is inches deep on the floor) I saw a "lone shouter" fall into a trance that lasted half

[23] *It is possible that the tradition was carried to Jamaica by Elder George Lisle, the former slave of Mr. Sharp, a loyalist of Savannah, who gave him his liberty. Lisle preached in Georgia during the Revolution. At the close of the war he went to Jamaica. Though an ex-slave, he organized, in Kingston in 1784, the first Baptist church on the island, and became "the chief human factor in the salvation of Jamaica." (L. G. Jordan, Negro Baptist History in the United States.)*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

an hour. She was covered with a coat and left where she fell until she returned to consciousness.

In *African Majesty* Egerton speaks of the same hands-off treatment, saying: "When persons not given to such behavior fall down in a fit, they are left where they fall, and no one touches them." It is a very easy matter for a Negro—even in this country—to become possessed. I have seen this phenomenon happen too many times among our Georgia Negroes to believe that the Negro patterned his behavior after that of white fanatics.[34] The chances are that the whites copied the blacks, since it is a matter of record that both races attended the same revivals. It is also possible that the whites took over the African song-form, and the system of punctuating the sermon with responses like the Negroes' "Tell 'im!" "Preach the Word!" "Go on!" and "Amen!" I heard a Negro preacher say to an unresponsive congregation: "You gotta help me. You needn't think you can sit back there an' do nothin'." From then on, he held their attention, and received the emotional support that is required to become a successful evangelist. This form of encouragement evidently came out of Africa, for Captain Canot, in his *Adventures of an African Slaver*, tells us that "It is the custom in African palavers to give token of assent by a sigh, a groan, a slight exclamation, or shout, when anything affecting, agreeable, or touching is uttered by a speaker."

Where the "holy laugh" came from I am unable to say, but it is clearly of a piece with the unusual observances already mentioned. I had read about it, but heard it employed on several occasions before I recognized the mirthless staccato "ha-ha" for what it was. It is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase, in much the same way as the enclitical *a* helps to fill any gap which may interfere with the undulating flow of a song.

There is far more of tradition connected with the religious observances of the Negroes than appears on the surface. The custom of sending messages by the dying to those who have gone before, moaning, singing, and "hollerin' " while "settin' up" with the dead, holding elaborate funerals, preaching the funeral sermon when it suits the convenience of the pastor—anywhere from one to three months after the "buryin' "—each one has its counterpart in Africa. Egerton, who stayed in one

[34] Melville J. Herskovits says in his Handbook of Social Psychology: "The religious hysteria that marks the manner of worship by certain white groups in the United States is so different from the kind of evangelical excitation found in Europe that it can be referred only to influences—in some cases, indeed, two or three times removed—which emanated from Negro religious gatherings."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

14. BLOW GABRIEL

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533 Undoubtedly the greater part of these songs originated under the stress of re-
786 ligious emotion, such as Laura showed when she strode to the middle of my yard
152 and, with a commanding arm lifted high, intoned musically, "Blow, Gabriel!" as
159 though sure of a response. Then she called again—louder this time—"Blow, Gabriel!" and still no answer. She waited a moment before calling at the top of her lungs, "Blow, Gabriel!"—and when nothing happened, she turned, complaining bitterly, gathered up the bunch of white oleanders she had laid beside me, and left as suddenly as she had come. Half chanting to Gabriel, she improvised as she went swiftly down the road, waving the flowers she had probably intended for the grave of her son, who lies in the old slave burying ground at Kelvin Grove.

786 It seems that earlier in the day she had shrieked and chanted, as is common
159 with those who get this type of religious hysteria. In the old days such excitement was a more usual and respected occurrence than now. The reference in old spirituals to "My head got wet wid de midnight dew" meant that under religious exaltation the individual wandered at night through wood and swamp, as Laura had for several days and nights before I saw her at the locked gate which barred her way to the plantation graveyard.

123 I called, "Where are you going?" She seemed to waken out of a dream and said,
786 "I forgot." Then she came closer, and impressively declaimed, "Miz' Parris'—I bin
787 sent by God to you. They say I'm crazy, an' they put me in jail nine days—but I'se seen God!" After a long harangue delivered in an impassioned but disconnected
159 way, she told me she had spent Tuesday night in Hell, that she'd been crucified. The blood had trickled down her back, the thorns had pierced her arms. She threw her arms out wide as though to show me. When she noticed they weren't clean, in an abashed aside she apologetically said, "I ain't wash 'em this mornin'." Then she went on, "You needn' tell me that God meant white folks an' colored people to sit down together."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

other denominations, I make no attempt to go into a description of usual church observances. My particular concern has been the preservation of the religious slave songs. Those of the Baptist Negroes—the most conservative sect on the Coast of Georgia—give greater evidence than the others of an African background. Coupled as they are with the most picturesque customs, they have come in for special consideration.

Although certain songs are peculiarly appropriate to such occasions as Easter and Communion, they cannot be rigidly classified according to the services which may have inspired them.[1] They were sung at any time, anywhere. The majority of them appear equally suited to church, prayer, and covenant meeting. However, the ceremonies connected with baptism, "settin'-up" with the dead, and burial mean so much to the Negro that a separate section of this Chapter is devoted to each of them. They appear to be connected with customs prevailing a century ago in the section of Africa from which the slaves were obtained. The significance attached to baptism in a river, or immersion on the outgoing tide, may tie up with the initiation rites connected with the river-worship of Dahomey; and anyone who reads what explorers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have to say about the Africans' concern with death will recognize that our Negroes display the same trait.

CHURCH, PRAYER, AND COVENANT MEETING

Patty Gardner[2] used to open the "South End" prayer meeting, held at Deacon Merchant's house, by singing the following song. As the other members joined in, they shook hands ceremoniously with their neighbors assembled in a circle.[3] The younger generation knew nothing of this custom until I had Old Quarterman come to the Cabin and "show them the way."

[1] Some may have come into existence while the slaves were at work—others were undoubtedly conceived under stress of religious emotion. In the old days a deacon, at the peak of his rhythmically chanted prayer, broke into song, in which those present joined. After a verse or two, he continued the prayer, ending his plea for mercy by singing with the others some appropriate slave hymn. It is unfortunate that this highly effective method of rousing the congregation should have lapsed in most churches. Now, the impassioned exhortation ends with a sudden drop into an ordinary conversational tone—like a dash of cold water in the face.

[2] Patty, while singing a religious song at work, would go into a trance-like state. Clarence told me he remembered seeing her moving rhythmically in a circle around her cabin, a dish towel in one hand and a discarded tin can (highly prized in those days) in the other. She dried the can over and over, totally oblivious of time or surroundings.

[3] This procedure is mentioned by Sir Charles Lyell in his Second Visit to the United States.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

she was told and Henry said: "Now that is over." That night he died in his sleep.

However, not all premonitions materialize. I was told of an instance on Edisto Island, where a young girl was stricken and believed her last hour had come. Relations were summoned, and the usual rites were conducted. At the last moment, however, when she was expected to make a proper exit, she was overcome with a desire to eat. She clamored for food, and the watchers went home in disgust.

In the old days it was the custom to send messages by the dying to those who had gone before.[18] A friend told me how an ex-slave came to her house just before her father's funeral, and said he wanted to talk to "Marse Jim." She explained to the old man that her father had just died. He said: "I know it. I want to talk to him." Of course he was given permission. How one wishes the conversation could have been overheard!

On the out islands of the Bahamas, the custom of "settin'-up" with the dying is an event enjoyed by the one who is bound for the other world quite as much as by those who come for a last visit. The procedure is practically the same as on the mainland, as is to be expected, since the custom was carried from the States at the end of the Revolution by slaves of the loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia. An acquaintance who spent a winter on one of the Berry Islands gave an account of a "settin'-up" with which she was concerned. A neighboring colored woman, who was very old, decided it was time for her to die, and begged for a certain white dress in which to lie in state. She set the date of her death, and invited her friends from the adjoining islands to be with her on the momentous occasion. She looked very handsome, I was told, and all went well—but twenty-four hours passed, and she did not die. Another day went by, and she still clung to life. When nothing happened on the third day, the guests were obliged to return to their respective homes. In a couple of weeks, however, she sent for them again. This time luck was with her, and she departed according to schedule.

IN THAT OLD FIELD

Susyanna (Illustration 29)[A] learned this lonesome melody from her grandmother, who was a slave. Sung in a minor key, it is one to which the printed word and note can never do justice. It must be heard to be appreciated. "That old field" is the Negro name for a burying ground, and the slave, like his cousins in Africa, was quite as much concerned with the life to come as with that of the moment.

[18] As exemplified in the song: "Ride on, Conquering King," p. 183.

A. [For Illustration 29, see Category 142, plate facing p. 177.—Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

Geoffrey Gorer tells us, in *Africa Dances*, that the primitive Negroes "know that the world is entirely spiritual," and "if we are sane" in believing that the physical universe, whether animate or inanimate, is bound by certain laws, which produce certain predictable effects, then "they are just mad. . . . This madness is not always apparent, for superficially Negroes seem to go about the ordinary business of life in a fairly normal way." It is only when you try to persuade them that they are not logical, that you find you cannot influence the most important side of their lives.

In this country the abolitionists seized upon this trait, and made much of it in their writings about the slaves' religious songs. The favorite theme of these writers was that in thinking of the world to come, and singing about it, the slaves found release from the misery of their lot here below—which has always seemed to me like a lot of sentimental nonsense. Their forebears were deeply religious people, and, as Gorer states, "religion is for us a thing apart [like our music]; for the African Negroes their whole existence." Explorers in Africa have told us, times without number, that music is as much a part of the life of the native as breathing—just as it was with our slaves in ante-bellum days. I can imagine Old Elizabeth singing this song until she went into a trance-like state. Gorer mentions that "Negroes can put themselves into very peculiar physical-mental states with extraordinary ease. They will go into trances, or throw fits at the slightest provocation. Even a Negro beating a tom-tom quickly becomes very strange; his pupils dilate and do not focus, he seems to become a rhythmic and unconscious automaton." From first-hand experience, I know that this characteristic survives to a surprising degree among our rural Negroes of the Georgia Coast.

Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me any way
In dhat ole fiel'.
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'
I don' care whah you throw me
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw me ova hills an' mountains
In dhat ole fiel'.
Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
In dhat ole fiel'
But still my soul is heaven boun'
In dhat ole fiel'.
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'
Throw my mother out a doo's
In dhat ole fiel'.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

RIDE ON CONQUERING KING

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As mentioned elsewhere, this is a good example of the question-and-answer type of song and was used at a "settin'-up" in accordance with the custom of sending messages by the dying to relations and friends in the other world.[18]

If you see my mother
Oh yes.
Won't you tell her for me
Oh yes.
I'm a ridin' my horse in the battle-field
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

Chorus: Ride on King
Ride on King
Ride on Conquering King
I want a see my Jesus in the mornin'.

[18] All of them are named in lengthening the song.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

ship was worthy of admittance. The Reverend Charles C. Jones, after many years spent in preaching to sea-island and mainland slaves concluded that they were inclined to place true religion in profession, in forms and ordinances, and in excited states of feeling, and true conversion in dreams, visions, trances, and voices, "all bearing a perfect or striking resemblance to some form or type which has been handed down for generations, or which has been originated in the wild fancy of some religious teacher among them."[62] They offered these dreams and visions to the church sessions as evidences of conversion just as the whites were inclined to do in camp meetings.

They were also quick to follow the custom of the whites in "churching" offending members. "The discipline of colored members," wrote the Reverend Mr. Jones, who, no doubt, had taken part on many such occasions, "is involved, tedious, vexatious and disgusting." Excommunications and suspensions were of "perpetual occurrence, for crimes shocking in character, and of themselves sufficient to show the general state of morals; such for example as adultery, fornication, theft, lying, drunkenness, quarreling, and fighting." The Reverend Mr. Jones thought that the Negroes perverted the gospel and colored their religious practices with their African superstitions. Thus their "doctors, prophets, and conjurers" modified the teachings of the white preachers.[63]

The church was not only responsible for giving Christianity to the Negroes, but also to a large extent for teaching a few of them to read and write. The early statutes

[62] Jones, *Religious Instruction of the Negroes*, pp. 125, 126.
[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 127, 128.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

When a person wished to become a member of the church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded the baptismal service, the minister told the church members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine, but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on